



IVAN

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IVAN

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BY

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IVAN

I V A N

“Shall I see thee no more in all the years
That loom as dark and threatening clouds above
My wintry head, that o’er the future hang
As black, appalling night of deepest gloom;
Nor hear thy deep and loving voice again
As once it sounded low, affectionate,
And sweet as solemn bells at morn that peal
Across the hills and gloomy forests green
To smiling vales, in echoes o’er and o’er.
Where art thou now, my only son—Ivan,
In thy proud youth more beautiful and strong,
More glorious than the brightest herald
Of days ascending reign, as angel bright,
Who stands upon the distant mountain peak.
In yonder placid river flowing calm
And mournfully reflecting in its deep.
Unfathomed still and cold the sombre sky
Of morn which slowly creeps o’er mountain far
And dimly shining walls of castle high
Of Altenstein, I seem to see the azure hue
Of thy mysterious eyes which ever shone
Upon me in their true and filial love.

Strong in the might of youth, so proud, my life,
My dark haired, innocent and smiling boy,
In golden armour clad, with shining sword

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And bright, thou rodest away one morn in Spring
When all was gay and light, save a broken heart
Which beat so sadly here, and weeping eyes
In pain which saw thee go so proudly down
The winding way that leads from castle tall
Into the world, to dangers of the war,
The strife that as a woeful dream appears
So dark within the trodden path of age.
From turret window here I saw thee turn
And wave a gallant hand on which there shone
The golden ring I gave thee when a child
Thy father lay in gloom, forever still,
Unheeding cry of widow's lonely heart,
The orphan's call, within that solemn hour
Which wrapped him in the voiceless sleep of time;
The olden ring which gave thee heritage
To castle by the river's solemn flow
And power o'er the vassals of his might.

My only son, where wanderest thou to-night
Afar from Oelmar's lonely castle wall?
In gloom we cry to thee, return, or send
A message to thy mother's aching heart.
Through all the brief midsummer night, oppressed
By suffocating heat and fears that fall
Intangible about my weary head,
I kneel by window close and iron barred
Which opens from the highest turret wall
And wait for thee; but from the mountain road
Ascending, or the river's silent flood
No sound as of approaching mortal comes.
In wild Thuringian forest to and fro
The phosphorescent lights in terror gleam,
And low appalling cries of phantoms sound

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As though consumed by tortures horrible.
They have a message unintelligible
From thee, my child. Their forms so plainly float
Among the giant trees, their woeful cries
So clearly sound across the dusky moat.
I feel within my heart they know of thee
And strive an awful fate of thee to tell.

But faintly now and far across the hills
The first inconstant ray of morn appears
Upon the frowning sky, as though it fain
Would flee again below the sombre east,
Relieving not my sorrow with the hope
That on its pinion comes a token sweet
From him I love. From highest tower on
The walls of Altenstein appears the gleam
Of silvery cross, as though to mock my woe.
Come not, thou summer day, oppressive, hot,
And unendurable, unless to heart
Of mother, desolate and wrung with grief,
Thou bringest tidings of the one for whom
These bitter tears are falling in the night.
This frightful woe, my God, is merciless;
No longer can I bear it. Send to me
Assurance with the light, that I may know
If yet he rides upon his gallant steed
Unto the war beside his sovereign,
Or if he coldly lies upon the plain,
Forever still, within the battle slain."

Catherine, aged princess of Oelmar,
Rose sadly from the sultry window high
In turret, iron barred, and slowly turned

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In stately, heartsick weariness to light
Of candles burning in the earven wall.
Her mournful garments, woven dark and long,
Appeared as shadows of the gloomy night
Yet lingering and unwelcome, to enshroud
Her face and hands in deep, despairing woe.
As pale as marble glow in holy gleam
Of dim uncertain light, her flowing hair
Shone snowy white above a noble brow
And gentle as the dawn; and as she bent
In weariness, extinguishing the gleam
Of golden candles one by one, she seemed
The embodiment of woe imprisoned in
The strangely weird and black appalling gloom.
One wavering light was let remain to shine
Across the moat and river lying still
Beneath the turreted and bastioned wall,
On dread Thuringian wood and purple sky
To minarets and walls of Altenstein.

Reluctantly, as sombre shadows flee
The coming of a hot, oppressive dawn,
The stately princess turned in weariness,
And passing slowly down the narrow stairs,
In gloom along the winding corridors,
Where deep and dread echoing noises rent
The dismal loneliness, at length she reached
A door in wide and gothic arch, which gave
Before the touch of snowy, gleaming hand.
In silence, dark as death's grim charnal hall,
Appeared the chapel, solemn in the gloom
And beauty of its earven wood and stone.
In the eastern wall, outlined by early glow

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Of morning's purple beam, a saintly form
Within the glowing panes of window stood,
As if to bless a suppliant below.
Her robe was pale and long, as dusky blue
Of river far beneath, and on her brow
Discerned but faintly in the feeble light,
A crown of changing sapphires seemed to shine.
Upon the hall in holy tenderness
She seemed to smile from Heaven to the earth;
The one faint form of light in all the gloom
Of chapel's high and dreadful, silent walls.

Awhile the aged princess stood in woe
And fear of unseen ill, that hovering near
Assayed her noble heart to terrify,
Then courage gaining to advance she came
Along the ancient and deserted aisle
Until, as white and mournful spectre, loomed
The marble altar high and cold against
A stately high and dark echoing wall,
Beneath the window ever glowing bright.
“Unanswering, pale and solemn altar, white,
That with thy gloom appalls my heart in woe,
Thou art a tomb which buries all my joy.
Where is the golden lamp that o'er thee hung
In former years, that lit to joy within
The weary hearts who came to honor thee?
Now empty thou of all that consolation;
Wide is flung the tabernacle door,
The vandal hands have desecrated thee.
And gone the holy lights that on thee burned.
So is my life bereft of all its joy,
So, empty is my heart of all its peace,

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Oppressed by rending bitterness and woe.”
Religion seeks in vain for Purity
Within the darkened halls of Unbelief.

“O God, what crime have I commit to bring
Down on my wintry head the punishment
Of death while yet the blood is flowing on
Within the silent veins. Thou King above
The earth whom ever I have sought to serve,
Why sendest thou such torture of the mind
And vague forebodings of ascending ill?
Where is my child, my glorious one, Ivan?
Speak to me, that my heart may be at rest.
From childhood’s early day until this time
O never have I seen such bitter woe!
Reveal to me what service can regain
Thy loving favor and the reign of peace
Within my heart. This grief I cannot bear!
If thou art merciful, O God, defend
Me now from sudden, unprovided death,
From sombre and unfathomed mystic tide
Of changing river flowing wide below!
With closed and burning eyes behold the flood,
The cool and sullen waters in the gloom
Inviting me unto a place of rest!
If thou canst save me now, O reach a hand!
Thy power now I challenge—fail me not!

Thou pale, cold Virgin, dost thou dare to mock
Me now when lies my weary life a wreck
Beneath thy hand! Thy form increases all
My bitterness, reminding me of days
In childhood, and the perfect love for thee.

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Thou art a mother, all my woeful heart
Thou knowest, and didst suffer for thy Son
A martyr's woeful death. If then thy grief
Was any more than mine, assist me now,
And I will strive again to honor thee.
But see how brightly down the morning light
Increases o'er the night! My gracious Lord,
Thy will I seem to know within the flood
That lights Thy mother's face above my gloom.
Thou wondrous Lady, solemnly I implore
Forgive the feeble scorn I offered thee.
'Twas but the madness of a grieving heart,
A tortured mind that wandered in the night.
Thy snowy arms extended bid me hope
For aid, and welcome me to morning light
Above the gloom of carven altar white.
Thy sweet and smiling face assures me now
That all is well with those who honor thee."

II

Deep in the earth below its cover thin,
The frozen crust discolored by the line
Of changing vapors round its throbbing rim;
Beneath the dwelling place of man who crawls
A puny ant within an atmosphere
Of night compared to that of universe;
Within its deepest heart where raging leap
The dark volcanic fires in anger red
And wild, awaiting but the appointed hour
Of earth's destruction swift, in whirlwinds high
To leap in might from prison depths below,
To envelop in its furious rage the earth,
With sinuous flame the deep unfathomed sea,
Destroying all the fortresses of man;
There is the citadel of Satan's might.
Which built upon a scarlet flood of fire
In terror floats within a circling dome,
A place of woe designed by cruel hand
Of demon in his spite to torture man
Who dares to fall within his service dread,
An inquisition dark and terrible,
An everlasting pit of punishment.

Upon a throne as black and horrible
As night of deep volcanic pit below,
The sharp and jagged walls of which ascend
In smouldering red and lava's seething flood,

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Where all was full of loneliness and fear
And silence shrieked below the ear of man;
In anger furious and disregard
Of writhing form of mortal far below,
Amidst a hissing swarm of serpents dread,
Appeared the form of Tophet's ruler, high
Enthroned upon the gloom of ebon rock,
Which by the hand of demon furious rent
Until it seemed a black and hopeless ruin
Cast upon a raging sea of flame,
Was shapeless and deformed as broken stone
Rejected heaped beside a broken wall
Of wild deserted realm afar and lone
Where ghastly roam the shrieking ghouls of night
Bewailing in their hideousness the gloom
And terror of that strange deserted place.

There, veiled in cloud of red ascending flame,
The form of Hell's appalling ruler sate
In scarlet majesty, unclothed in might
Of endless death; a serpent coiled to spring,
With sharp metallic cry and scornful head,
Upon its charmed prey, with venoméd tooth
Exposed to view and sparkling eyes that gleamed
In deep enthralling spell of glittering hate,
Envenomed woe, and fume of poisonous fang
Which sinks so oft within the human heart.
The spell of demon wrath was like a cloud
Of dreadful pain and strife imprisoned in
The circling dome, escaping to the earth.
He frowned as monarchs frown who darkly see
Their dread commands by vassals disobeyed,
And raved as demons rave against the might

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That keeps them bound to wailing earth and Hell,
And writhed as serpents writhe in mortal pain
When crushed beneath the scornful heel of man.

At length a deafening roar which shook the throne
Announced a visitor at the iron door
Which opened in the side of crater dim
And rose in gloom above the ascending flame.
The frown on Satan's scarlet face had fled
And left a deep sarcastic smile which grew
In bitter hate, as slowly he arose,
Extending evil form as genii high
Until above the door his scarlet head
As scorpion appeared in fiery glow
Of dread malignity. With awful crash
The gate was opened wide, emitting flame
That rushing to escape from out the pit
Bore hissing serpents on its lurid train;
But swift upon the fire recoiling then
The gate was shut with crash more fearful than
The first which rent the boiling depths below,
And by the dread and mighty ruler stood
His greatest vassal, mighty prince of Hell,
The black and scowling, hideous Baálzebub.

“Thou dark unfaithful knave, thou cursed one,
Thou disobedient, black, rebellious slave,
Thou hideous—thou traitor to my cause!
Ungrateful wretch whom I have settled o'er
The human horde of Northmen rude and wild.
Deceitful Woden thou to make thyself
A god above thy master's regal head;
To cause unseeing man to bow before

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Thy hideous form and worship thee as god.
Usurped prerogative was not thy crime.
I pardoned that; but now thine arrogance,
Malicious knave, is more than I can bear.
Why tarried thou when lord of mighty Hell,
The maker of its pit, the dungeons red,
Commanded yesterday thy presence here?
Thou dilatory wretch, upon thy knees
Bow down and worship me! Why hesitate?
Perform the rite mine anger to appease,
Or thou shalt rue thy disobedience
This woeful day in fiery pit of Hell."

"Ho! ho!" in bitter scorn laughed Baálzebub,
In tones that rang as hoarse as thunder's crash
And angry as the lightning's vivid flash
Against a dark terrific sky of night.
The sharp and glistening teeth protruded from
His ebon lips, whereon the crimson stain
Of human blood was seen. "Thy fury cease.
Thy rage at my forbidden stay shall turn
To glee, for soon the walls of deepest Hell
Shall ring with tortured cry of mortal soul."
His voice was like the roar of mighty storm
Which strikes in furious might upon the shore,
When slowly from his flaming heart he drew
In scornful wrath a hundred writhing souls
Of northmen done to death in bloody war
Upon the earth, and held them shrieking o'er
The brink of cauldron bottomless and red
And awful in its strange terrific gloom,
With clouds of suffocating vapors wild
And fragments of a broken mineral

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Revolving at the source of gravity
Which cruelly rent the inmates whirling there.

“Bravely hast thou fought,” he raved in storm
Above the wailing ones who scorching hung
In fear upon his black, gigantic hand,
While Satan sat and smiled in scarlet glee,
In irony, upon his mighty throne.
“Well fought the battle, and the victory
Thy comrades celebrate in drunkenness.
Now doth the hated Emperor bereave
The death of those whom thou didst justly slay;
He weeps for thee beyond his mighty arm
That stretcheth down to gate of Hell, secure
Against his solemn might. Why dost thou shriek
So wildly, as in fear of his defeat?
On earth thou wouldst have laughed in scornful glee
When told of such a victory 'gainst his throne;
But traitorous slaves to his great majesty
Thou art, and traitors doubtless to the reign
Of him who sits before thy glazing eyes.
Thou art but dogs, to his allegiance
Unfaithful as the light; and for thy fear
I cast thee cursed down into the pit
Of death to lie and burn forevermore.”

He shook from scornful hand the souls of those,
Misguided by his mind upon the earth,
Who fell into an awful pit, amid
Its wailing throng of unseen sufferers,
And gloated in derision o'er their pain.
From out the fiery den came frightful cry
Of endless woe and lamentation deep

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As raging storm at sea: "O Lord, by thee
Forsaken, in the depths of Hell we cry,
'Help! Help!' The arrows pierce the soul,
The hungry flame the blood drinks up, the gleam
Of angry serpents hideous have changed
The heart to stone, and scorpions writhe about
The tortured form of soul; the blackest night
The eyes have wrapped in dread terrific gloom;
But shriek is heard and moan of those who cry
In vain to Thee; the very life is but
A hungry flame consuming with remorse
And endless bitterness the tortured mind
For those transgressions red upon the earth.
Thou canst not aid us now; upon the soul
The gates of Hell forever closed—Too late
We cry unto Thy majesty on high."

"Shut down that door!" then Satan cried in storm,
In anger red, "It is the endless cry
To Him who mighty rules on high, that proud,
Majestic One, whose glory I detest.
Pour out the oil on those who shriek to Him.
I'll teach the fools that I am master here.
What tidings bringest thou, O Baálzebub,
Of those who strive against the Emperor?
How goes the battle now? Is there a chance
To win by means of thy rude worshippers?
If not, the Turk I'll lead with subtle arm
Against His throne omnipotent, and drive
Him off the earth, which doth belong to me;
The jealous God who rules the universe,
Who will not leave to me the souls of men,
I'll drive in terror from His chosen seat;

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Ah yet I'll rise and throw Him from the throne
And rule in power all, committing Him
To a place ten thousand times as hideous
And black as this. How goes the deadly strife,
Religious war upon the northern earth?
Shall victory perch upon the standard there?"

With ringing clash the iron door of pit
Was closed by dark and evil Baálzebub,
Who stood a mighty weight upon the lid,
And with a smile of fiendish glee inclined
A wolfish ear of cunning hate toward
His master's throne in fiery prominence.
With grimace bold and bloated bloody eye
He gazed about as though in secret fear
Of unseen listener, then coarsely deep,
A cloven hoof upon the iron door,
In loud and diabolic tones replied:
"Since to this dungeon deep I brought the soul
Of him who was their Leader, dark and bold,
They have arisen mighty, listening now
In eagerness to words of deepest hate,
Which pour into the base and willing ear
By ministers of thine. So far is won
The victory, and even though thou rage,
I am a worshipped god; and hanging on
Their evil minds in dark descending cloud,
Their stubborn intellects have chosen me
A god, as in primeval days of old
They prayed to thee as Woden strong and high,
So now they adore me in a similar form.

But dark the strife doth rage, for even though
I hang upon the very breathing soul,

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There's some who will not honor me, but cling
In stubbornness to thy Great Enemy.
They fight with bloody hand and fall to death.
The realm is but a place of flowing blood;
And angels of the light, accursed host,
O'erhang the frenzied step and strive to stay
The wrathful hand with foolish words of love.
Could I but cast them howling down into
The seething pit, the victory would be mine.
There is a nobleman who used to dwell
At Oelmar, and whose mother honors me,
A lady proud, whom I shall laugh to see
Go shrieking down into this dungeon deep;
Shall laugh to see her meet her honored lord
Who screameth here. She followed him on earth
And left the halls of Him who scorneth thee;
Within the Leader's mighty step she comes,
And to this place shall follow him, to Hell.
The victory's mine if I could gain the son;
He has the arms and vassals of his Lord."

In fury Satan rose from off his throne.
"HO! Slaves! my armor bring. Too long
Have I in desuetude remained here.
Put on each deadly scale and bind it firm
With skillful hand. I must not tarry now
When such a prize appeareth on the earth.
Give me a dart, a sheath of arrows sharp
And poisoned in the blood of serpents red.
The battle I must lead. Sweet Baálzebub,
Go hang upon the son as mantle wrapped
About his proud and scornful countenance,
And thou shalt drag him slowly down to death

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With cunning thought of hate, with every wile,
Until his heart shall change to blackest night;
Until his soul be changed to hate what thou
Dost hate, and love what thou shalt have him to.
O mighty Baálzebub, what if they call
Thee god, it better pleases me, for thus
His scorn my diadem shall crush. Lead on,
And thou shalt see how Satan tempteth man!
The mighty Emperor shall fall, the throne,
His cursed seat upon the earth, shall in
Destruction fall, and crumbling into dust,
To fiery dust, shall evermore be lost!"

III

In flowing robe of black which braided fell
Unto the earth o'er subtly hidden form,
In priestly robe as that of olden days
Worn by the great high priest of Israel,
With mitre high and black o'er hidden face
A giant figure stood by the winding road
On brink of precipice, on mountain side,
As though to challenge any traveler
Who might in weary pilgrimage ascend.
Afar against the sky of summer blue,
Which hung in radiant beauty o'er the earth,
O'er valleys green and winding river far
Where castles gleamed beside its sparkling flow,
The clouds of ebon hue, as though in train,
Were moving slowly to the mountain high;
Increasing as they came in solemn might.
Outlined against them stood in majesty
On wild and rugged height the appalling form,
Which seemed a stately god who would command
The earth, in terror o'er its circling globe,
The weird and pagan god of northmen rude
And bold, the Woden, god of those who mock
The God of Love was standing in the way.

About his face and tall heroic form
So close the dread and priestly mantle fell
In fold of blackest hue, so solemnly

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He stood in bold relief and rugged might
Against the clouds that rolled across the sky
In silhouette, that to a heedless one,
A pilgrim of the earth ascending slow
The steep and narrow path, his grandeur bold.
His giant form and solemn prominence,
His all compelling air of majesty
Would deep and prostrate reverence impel,
Would fill the worshipper with mortal fear
Of that Great King who rules the universe;
But not so swift the wise before his form
Would fall, adoring god, for gazing close
Upon his weird appalling might, no ray
Of light would gleam from his descending robe;
No loving face would shine, as in a dream
The Lord of Heaven smiles upon His own.
Assurance giving sweet, that all is well,
When fleeting life is o'er His face will shine
With love on them in mansions glowing bright.

Instead, but darkly seen, a cunning hand
Clutched secretly the robe in sombre fold
As though it illy fit. From covered face
Shone forth an eye, transfixing with its ray.
As serpent charmeth unsuspecting one
Who tarries in the way its form to view,
Destroying with its spell the human heart,
Enveloping the soul in black despair.
And swiftly drawing it, ensnared, at length
With frightful cry o'er dread and slippery brink
Of yawning precipice, to fall
In screaming pain down to an endless death
In fiery depths below, to pit of Hell.

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So, quite invisible to mortal eye
Of him who heedless goes the way of life,
But not to mortal heart attuned to love,
As ravenous wolf in sacred robe of lamb,
In black hypocrisy and burning hate,
Stood Baálzebub beside the way attired
As pagan god, and waiting for his prey.

The sound of horn upon the mountain air
Was heard afar, as though to challenge earth
In battle for the right, engage in war,
In might of armored man to overcome,
To struggle and to win, or in defeat
To bravely stand and die a soldier's death;
And o'er the crest of mountain's higher path
A nobleman arrayed in armor dark
As cloud of night, on helmet crest a plume
Of blackest waving hue, in majesty
Of scornful youth, of deep unchanging gloom,
On dark Arabian steed, in solemn pride
Descending rode. Another youthful knight
In softer raiment clad, upon whose shield
Of deepest olive green a golden cross
Was seen to gleam within the early sun,
Accompanied the first before his train.
No sign of holy cross was on the shield
Of him in sable hue, no emblem bright
The dangerous spell of evil one to stay
From throbbing heart or lips of scarlet hue.
From soul to ward the instrument of death;
No sign to show him faithful to his God.

In confidence that he could never fall
Beneath the hand of ill, but in his own

IVAN

Conceited might could conquer every foe
And drive in trembling fear opponents dark
Upon a vanquished field unto the death,
The lord of Oelmar came from kingdoms far
Within the East, with long and vassal train
Of armored soldiers, riches plenteous,
In mighty pomp returning from the war,
By sombre path which led o'er mountain high,
Through forest dread, and green familiar plain
Below, to distant Oelmar dark which lay
In gloom beside a winding river deep.
He spoke no word to him who silent rode
In green array to cheer his frowning gloom,
For deep within his mind a hidden storm
Of doubt and fear and growing unbelief
In tempest broke, a dark and raging sea,
Engulfing in its woe a tortured heart,
As waves of ocean roll in terror high
Above the sail of struggling ship, which caught
Within its seething flood is shattered down.

Unconsciously to him who hurried down
The narrow, steep, and demon haunted way,
Baälzebub stepped forth, revealing arm
As hideous, black as stormy sky of night;
His evil face in dread malignity
Shone darkly forth, and on his wrinkled brow
Was writ the frightful sign of those who drag
The soul to death, to endless pit of Hell.
Advancing at a turn on mountain side,
In narrow way above the precipice
In gloom below, the dark Arabian steed
Sprang swiftly in his terror back, then leaped

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To the very brink of yawning chasm wide
And deep, in wild and frantic fear, and stood
As though transfixed by some inhuman spell.
His quivering nostrils wide and flecked with foam
Displayed his dark enthralling fear; his feet
Refused to move from station dangerous.
Although his master gently coaxed and strove
With foreign words his terror to abate.

At length the angry knight dismounted slow,
And his descending train of followers
With difficulty stood and gazed in fear
Upon the scene, for steep the imminence
Of mountain rose above, and sheer below
The black and yawning pit of terror lay,
A pathway leaving on the winding ledge
So narrow one could scarcely ride upon it.
About the turn and down the broadening path
In caution gazed the knight; observed no cause
For fear of quivering steed. He did not feel
The arm invisible and black which wrapped
Its circling fold about his armor's might.
He did not see the cloud of demon robe
Which fell invisible about his form,
Which caught within its deep and circling net
The mind, the throbbing heart, the very soul.
His faithful steed gave warning, hopeless shriek,
Then darted down the mountain path to him,
And stood again as though in warning wild
Portrayed with terror in his beauteous eyes.

With curses loud the knight remounted then
His trembling steed, and rode with cruel spur

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Against his sable side, as though possessed,
In storm of wild and reckless energy;
And speeding swiftly down the dangerous path
His form was lost to view by those who stood
And gazed astonished on the empty scene.
They hurried on, to find their master dead
Perchance, within the rough and stony way,
Or lying far below in canyon deep,
His body lifeless, of the soul bereft.
Meanwhile, as wildly on he dashed, his head
By dread incessant doubt and pain was bent;
At every step on dangerous, rocky way
It seemed his horse would plunge to death beneath;
His heart was like a weight of lead, his soul
At every desperate leap with raging thought
Of fear was filled, by death and murder rent.
The demon had his will; Baälzebub
Had won the noblest heart in Oelmar's realm.
His was the battle now that soul to keep
With angels of the light, whose cause it is
To strive the noble heart of man to turn
From evil way and bring its worship to
The halls of peace and love and purity.

IV

Descending from above a forest road
Appeared in cool sequestered vale of green,
O'ershaded by the great and ancient trees,
In peaceful manner winding calm and white.
An oak, as a sentinel, protecting bent
To form a shelter for the pilgrims who
Wandering down the mountain way could pause,
Secure from scorching sun's midsummer gleam,
To rest awhile and watch the dancing leaves
O'erhead, the sunbeams sifting gently through;
But dark the olive green of grasses tall,
The thick and struggling undergrowth, the vine,
Within recesses where the morning sun
Had failed to penetrate, the borrowed gloom
Of vanished night retained persistently,
Refused to cast it off, although the rays
Of gleaming sun on sheltering screen o'erhead
Descended bright, as though to closer search
The thickets and the marsh; where flitting birds
Poured forth a brilliant repertoire of song,
And other creatures of the wood appeared
In drowsy search of daily sustenance.

The minor strain of locust filled the air,
Which stirred but softly in oppressive heat,
And golden-winged butterflies had lit
In dazzling playfulness within the way
And restless danced upon the pebbles brown.

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As far as penetrating eye could reach
The road came down in circling line
Upon the tranquil mountain high
Which rose majestic to its snowy peak
Where dark the clouds in mystery appeared.
Beyond the oak it darkly seemed to cease
At a pleasant turn, as flowing waters sink
Mysterious and abruptly in the earth,
And leave the anxious eye to search in vain
For the evidence of river flowing on.
Profusely scattered o'er the shady path
In gracefulness and light the flowers lay
Which fell from drooping tree beside the way
In snowy white, and added to the scene,
Secluded, all the radiance of bloom,
The calm and cool midsummer peace of morn.

Two holy men came down the mountain way
And paused beneath the ancient, gnarled oak,
Whose branches made a canopy o'er the head
Of gloom mysterious in the forest wild.
One plucked a flower, breathing tenderly
In love upon its delicate and fragrant form,
Examining with care its beauty pale,
The brittle leaf, the petal intricate.
His holy face was white and spiritual
Above a robe of black descending down
In solemn, sacred fold to quiet green;
His hands were stainless as the snowy peak
That loomed afar against the summer sky,
And shone above his robe of sombre hue
As chaste as fragile flower resting there;
The hope of youth within his gentle eyes,

IVAN

Resembling azure blue above his head,
The mystical delight with every fair
And holy thing of earth in beauty seemed
Enthroned, as that celestial light which rules
The circling earth, the sun, the moon, the stars.

The other darkly stood, the embodiment
Of that unanswering woe in quietude
Which reigns at glowing noon within the wild
And melancholy haunt unfrequented
By heedless step of man. His solemn form
Was circling bent with age, as mighty tree
Leaned proudly down above the adjacent wood
In condescension deep; within his dark
And solemn eyes appeared a holy gleam,
The weird, the strange mysterious light of priest.
In weariness against the aged oak
He leaned to rest, and gazed about the path
Which turned in sudden manner down, below
The base of emerald knoll which hid to view
The scene obscure from flower bordered way.
Awhile he stood in silence, filled with peace,
Which seemed to rest upon his solemn form
As fragrant roses on an early tomb;
Then spoke in earnest voice, as solemn, deep.
Melodious and strange as pealing bell:

“As down the wildwood path unthoughtful go
The pilgrims to the base of yonder knoll,
Which looms so suddenly in the shaded light,
Obscuring way that windeth ever on
In downward path with termination final
Where flows the river deep in sullen tide

IVAN

Into the wide and boundless sea, so youth
In thoughtlessness adown the way of life
Heeds not the beauty of its present way,
But rushes on from now to future's screen,
In eagerness to find the changing path;
By weariness o'erwhelmed and sorrows strange
He comes at length to places desolate
And bare as that of field deserted in
The vale beneath. So doth the wicked go
To dread eternal death, pursuing vain
The phantom-like and worldly joys of youth
Which flit enticingly before the feet
As golden butterflies within the sun
In restless beauty quiver in the way,
To vanish suddenly before the hand
Below the shadows of the gloomy hill.

“Life is an enigma from its early morn,
When from the unknown comes a deathless soul
Into the maze of earth, from out the dread
The hidden mystery of the endless night.
Then memory awakens in the intellect
And bravely wars throughout its fleeting years
To overcome the intangible that strives
To wrest from it the glorious crown of life.
A mortal soul is but the battleground
Of forces good with those of Baálzebub;
And if they overcome a gift awaits
It, priceless, in the halls of Paradise,
But if they fail, the trembling span of life
Is snapped, in woeful darkness ends; the night
In fear comes down, as dark and terribly
As thunder clouds in raging fury dash

IVAN

Their torrents down upon the close of day
Within the wild and stony Alps, amid
A frightful roar of thunder and the gleam
Of lightning vivid on the angry sky."

Cajetan's words the other quietly heard,
Attentively, with deferential mien;
Then lifting all-compelling eyes of blue
To thick o'ershaded bough and dancing leaves
He answered, sweetly as the southern wind
Entrancing murmurs through a clarion reed:
"My holy brother, all thy words are true,
In wisdom spoken, with the light of age.
We cannot penetrate the mystic veil
Which hangs before the tabernacle high
Of God, in love to those who do His will,
And separate themselves from bonds of night.
He is the radiant sun, who faultless guides
His faithful followers, and lights them on
Forever in the path of endless life.
His love is brighter than the noonday sun,
And drinks the adoration of the just
As thirsty ray descends from out the sky
In beauty golden to the changing tide
Of mighty river flowing to the sea.

"Let us not grieve o'er those gone down to death,
But strive with all our might to save the ones
Who now in stubborn blindness rushing on
The way of life, shall come to river deep
And terrible destruction in the night;
For God is Love to those who hear His voice
And do His will, but those who disobey

IVAN

His just command, an all-destroying wrath
Draws down upon their disobedient heads.
Then let us work to change the wilful heart,
Misguided souls of those who struggle here,
Endeavoring now to bring them in the fold
While yet the sun in radiance streameth down
Alike upon the just and those who leave
The only fold of Love. We must not wait
Until the golden day descending lies,
And shadows creep in darkness from the east.
Too late the word of hope is spoken then
To mortal in despair; too late doth love
With melting tears besiege the hardened heart.
At morn's the most propitious time to guide
The human soul into the paths of peace,
Of love, and bounden duty to its God.

“As yonder form of knight within the sunlight
Riding down the mountain far away,
So hastily, with long and quivering train
Of sable followers, so death comes down
The changing path of life, o’ertaking those
Who stand in idleness beside the way.
Then come with me at once, for in my heart
A terror of that form above impels
The more the eager voice and hands to win
With words of love the ones who darkly dwell
Below within the brown and scorching vale;
Who bound with error’s burning chain that grinds
The spell of death into their weary souls.
If from the hands of one the iron links
Are severed with my glowing words of love,
My life will flow more peacefully, the mind

IVAN

Will more contented be. What matter if
The lord of Oelmar comes, and finding all
His vassals in the vale of Altenstein,
Strikes with a dark avenging sword and slays
The unresisting form. He did not give
The life, and has dominion only o'er
The poor and hardened form material,
Which bent with labor to him gives the due
Of common toil—the soul belongs to God.”

With hastening steps and hearts that beat
In premonition of an evil near
The holy men the cool o’ershaded way
Came down amid the flowers; turning swift
About the hill in gloom beside the path,
Saw lying still below in summer heat
Of noonday sun, a village, squalid, poor,
As haunts of vice by evil men upraised
To gain domain insidious o’er the mind
Of youth, and wrest from it with wicked hand
The recompense, the hard earned fee of life.
The village lay within a scorching vale
Forlorn, of strange deserted fields, o’ergrown
By grasses tall and thick and yellow vine,
And plants that struggled for a life therein.
Few fields were tilled and they were nearly choked
With noxious weed that could no higher grow.
How desolate the fields of those who war,
And piteous the homes of those who slay
The messengers of God, who banish from
Malicious hearts the rule of peace, and strive
To force the reign of reason from the mind.

IVAN

The travelers hastened down the sloping way,
And came at length in open, narrow lane
To a mean and lowly hut which stood upon
The outskirts of the village poor. Two dark,
Ferocious dogs enchained beside the gate,
Which hung upon a post decaying, black,
Barked savagely, but strove in vain to loose
Their heavy chains. An evil-visaged form
Came darkly forth and gazed in curious scorn
Upon the visitors. Disorderly
Her tattered garments hung from sloven form;
Her eyes were sharp and cold as steel, and from
Their evil depths there shone a prejudice
In bitterness against the holy men.
Her claw-like hands clutched savagely the door,
Decaying, black, and seemed to darkly hold,
As evil spirits to the gates of Hell.
Her hair, disheveled, hung in tangles wild
Above a hooked nose that scarlet bent
To evil mouth, wherein a yellow fang
Disgustingly appeared, and eager seemed
In readiness to strike the travelers.

She stood but briefly gazing on the men,
But turned and shrieking fled adown the street
With cry arousing many villagers,
With words of fear proclaiming the advent
Of hated priest; in frenzy cursing loud,
Accusing them of insult offered her.
Soon came a mob of howling peasantry
Composed of men too feeble for the war,
Who bore in sling the arm, or crutch employed,
Who hobbling painfully along the street,

IVAN

In frenzy shouted and derision deep;
Of slattern crying to the savage dogs
Which ran as though in chase of animal;
Of children pale and evil-faced who screamed
In cruel glee at thought of punishment.
With them returning foremost came the witch,
Who wildly shrieked and clamored for the blood
Of holy men, who stood beneath an oak
That gnarled rose and blasted in the street,
Whose broken top appeared a mocking hand
That pointed with a deep and shattered scorn
In black malignity unto the skies.

They surged around the two as demons rage
In Hell about the souls of those condemned
To everlasting death, but touched them not;
For with uplifted hands they seemed to hold
In check the savage fury of the mob.
“Stone them to death!” the sloven shrieking cried
In frenzy loud. “They are the foes of god,
Who preach allegiance to the Emperor,
Whom they adore, instead of him we serve;
The representatives of scarlet one
Who sits upon the seven bloody hills
And rules with mighty hand’s oppression deep!
Death, to his traitorous slaves who dare to come
Within the streets of this our city fair!
They are but idol-worshippers who strive
To chain the mind with those unholy hands,
In superstition dread; the glorious will,
Protesting, by its mighty ruler freed.
Again they seek to nail in ignorance
The very soul to that unfathomed rock
Of torture, and the inquisition dread.

IVAN

“Why hesitate to burn them at the stake?
Would they not be a sacrifice to god
Who angry now beholds their impudence?
Enchain them to the oak and I will light
The purging fires that burn from wicked hearts
The mark of devil’s hoofs. Let them be made
Unholy martyrs to their cruel faith.
Their vile perversion of the gospel deep
Beneath the falsely written document
Dehudes the mind of man. The just shall live
By faith! O marvelous word of Leader bold
The wicked might to brave, the Emperor
To dare. He bravely hoped before the earth
Was rent in its destruction imminent
To lead an army’s overwhelming might
Unto his very seat, dethroning that
Presumptuous Anti-Christ who scarlet sits
In dread abomination on his throne.
Appalling horrors in that city seen
Were told by Leader, foolish, when he went
As penitent to climb the marble stair
Of Pilate’s house. O legend falsified!

“The just shall live by faith alone! Why labor
Then or pray for that already won!
Eternal life is offered free to those
Who say the simple words of ‘I believe.’
What need to fast in rigid penitence?
Why should we mortify the body here?
Thy doctrine’s false as quicksand by a sea
Of night, as quagmire’s all-consuming bog!
With flaming fire and sword it shall be swept

IVAN

Away, as burning chaff upon a wild
And hot midsummer night! O cursed be
The all-compelling mystery of that
Assumed by thee! With Satan's scarlet might
The peasantry are awed; the grinding chain
Of superstition has but lately broken;
Still they cling to deepest error taught
By priest! But soon thy institution red
And horrible shall in the seething flame
Be wiped from off the earth, and Freedom's voice
Shall sound again the trumpet call of Peace."

Her sharp, fanatic eyes in frenzy gleamed
As with her shrieking wild, in fury loud
She urged the mob, now timid at approach
To priestly ones who stood majestically,
To drag them down to red, inglorious death.
Young Ferdinand stretched forth a hand to soothe
The venomed hatred stirring in the mob,
And as the tumult partly ceased he spoke
In deepest love, his voice echoing sweet:
"My friends, thy rage is like tempestuous sea
Which surges round Gibraltar's mighty rock
And madly strives in fury vain to dash
The slightest pebble from its fortresses
Secure. The Emperor who's denied by thee
Is founded on a rock, from which the one
Who from the gates of Hell issues in wrath
Shall never loosen him, or 'gainst his might
Prevail. He is the representative
Of God, and reason should enlighten thee
That all His enemies are in a league
In vain, to throw him from that mighty seat.

IVAN

“Why rage against the Emperor? Suppose
That he is vile, as thou dost falsely say—
Did Jesus ever rage against the King,
Or strive to overthrow his lawful reign?
Instead, He gave His life, resisting not,
To torture dread, to death upon the cross,
The worst devised by any demon’s mind.
He had more cause to hate than ever man
Had cause; when stripped of all His garments white
And bruised and scourged against the pillar by
The mad and puny hand of man; when crowned
By piercing thorn and weighed by heavy cross
In bleeding weariness He fell to earth;
His beauteous feet and hands which ever gave
But love and mercy to afflicted man
By nails were pinioned to the wood, and thus,
Above the earth, a stainless sacrifice,
And mocked by hatred in the voice of man,
The only Son of God, His priceless gift
Was given back in man’s ingratitude.

“What did He say when thus upon the earth
He gazed? What could He, broken, say
To those barbarians? What would your lips
Have said? What would your tortured soul have felt
If you had suffering hung upon the tree?
‘Forgive them, for they know not what they do.’
’Twas thus He spoke, while they in fury raged
And mocked His dreadful agony. Were they
His followers? The most untutored child
To this could make reply. Are you within
His sacred fold, and stand resisting not
His frenzied murderers? If so, beware

IVAN

Of hatred for thy fellow man, and strive
With love to gain the victory over death.
Did ever Christian worthy of the name
Let glowing fires of hatred in the heart
Increase, and not a struggle make to stay
Their blasting might; nor strive to imitate
His Master's holy life? Apply the test
And see if thou dost follow Him, or that
Plutonic horde of traitorous Baálzebub.

“Why dost thou say the just shall live by faith
Alone? No need to strive for what is won.
Unnecessary, penance, and the faith
Of man alone will gain the crown of life?
How cowardly? What base ingratitude
Such blessing to accept and in return
Give nothing to the Master's heart of love.
What words were better said disproving such
Than when His voice proclaimed that all should die
Unless they penance did. I ask the proof
Of man, and challenge any one who holds
Such doctrine true, to follow in His steps,
Which is the way to prove that thou art true
To Him, whose every breath was suffering here.
If thou dost read with earnest loving care,
And not with hate, to prove some doctrine true
Which never had a proof, except within
An evil mind, thou'lt find the way of life
Is one of penance from the earliest hour
Until the shadows of the night come down
To veil the further way from mortal sight.

“Wouldst thou make God untrue? Impossible!
And say the Emperor is guided by

IVAN

The dull and puny mind of man, instead
Of Him who came as fire on Whitsuntide?
If thy belief is true, then false is He;
For where is now the institution bright
Established on that far, mysterious day,
Continually guided by his mighty hand,
Except the one thou sayest is the throne
Of devil in iniquity? Beware
Of Satan wicked and his prophets false!
Whose subtleness remaineth now as calm
And tranquil as the sea, which darkly hides
With smiling face a world of hideous things;
Who veils, incomprehensible, a woe
As deep as ever human heart could feel.
Your minds are dim as that of monarch proud
Who followed with a murder in his heart
The hosts of Israel, and darkly saw
But in confusion dread a thunder-cloud,
Which to the faithful ones was shining light,
Protecting them from that pursuing foe.

“So thoughtlessly, within mysterious power
That institution holy in its light
Seems but a thunder-cloud of darkest woe,
Which rising in the night enshrouds in gloom,
Destroying blight, the nations of the earth.
In ignorance against it thou dost strive,
To overthrow what cannot be destroyed.
Deluded man, cease now that enmity
Against the institution fair and bright
Established by omnipotence of God
And given in His love to imperfect man.
If thou wouldst strive to gain eternal life,

IVAN

Take up thy cross within its beauteous halls,
Assay to follow Him in truth, and strive
With all thy might His love to recompense.
Renouncing error, put His armor on;
Give battle for the right, maintain the truth;
And when the hour of death comes darkly down,
No chilling fear or doubt shall thee oppress,
But seraph hands shall bear thy peaceful soul
Unto the God whom we have served, and who
Shall on that day become our sweet reward.”

So Ferdinand delivered to the throng,
Which stood on every side in attitude
Unkind, in love his exhortation brief.
Some, cursing, jeered his words, while others stood
And heard attentively his argument.
His face with glowing light shone spiritual
And calm, and deep his solemn voice upraised
Seemed music clear and sweet proceeding from
A viol touched by some angelic hand.
Cajetan darkly smiled in pleased accord
When he had ceased, and laid approving hand
Upon his head; then spoke with voice of might
To wild accusing mob, and as he spoke
A knight with sable steed came down the way
And paused beside a shattered tree. Observed
By few he stood in listening attitude,
As night's appalling clouds in fury loom
And hesitate; and darkly smiled on one
Who rode in green attire, a youthful knight
Who bore emblazoned on his glowing shield
A cross of gold that lit his countenance.

IVAN

“Woe!

To them who proudly stand in places high
And crush with mighty heel the innocent,
The poor, whose iron hands uphold the rod,
Blood-stained and grinding of adversity;
Who bring the plague of want and famine down
In frightful manner o’er the prosperous land;
Who wring from hardened hands a tithe unjust
To gorge the never-filléd maw of wealth!
Woe! to those who cry in unbelief and scorn
Against Jehovah’s might and endless reign,
And in presumption dare deny the truth
Of His revealéd word, or criticise
In scorn His institutions holy, fair,
As though their egotistic minds were more
Than whirling earth, the flaming sun, or pale
And faded moon, or many countless stars
Invisible which shine beyond the sky;
As though the little world material
About them seen was everything which sprang
From trembling chaos out the gloom of night;
Who with intent maliciously pervert
The word of truth, interpretation false
Propounding to the intellect of man.

“As suddenly as tree which flourisheth,
As green bay tree within the forest dark,
By waters turbulent, shall wicked one
By an avenging, mighty axe be cut
In degradation down, to swiftly fall,
Be cast into the flame, consumed in death.
But those who love the Lord and do His will
Obedient, in childlike faith adore

IVAN

His glorious, sovereign omnipotence.
How great shall be their recompense, how swift
Their sweet reward, for all the woes of life
Endured in bitterness and pain below.
Forth from a bondage dread shall they be brought
Into the promised land, to banquet there
With God, in mansions beautiful and bright;
In love and never changing innocence,
Where sorrows terrible shall be no more,
And partings dread, nor death, nor any pain.
Strive then to gain that wondrous heritage,
For all is dross beside its golden crown.

“Woe! woe! to them who bound by error’s chain
Have given to the enemy the soul,
Whose demon-guided minds deny the light,
Which burning gave them sight to curse the God
Who condescending bent, its leaping flame
Transformed and placed it here to brighter grow
And burn for Him forever in the night.
The friendless and alone may comprehend
In slight degree the base ingratitude
Of undeserving man who curses Him.
Woe! to such as these! Furies are in store
More terrible than all-consuming flame
In day of wrath. With brass shall they be broken,
Cast aside to be renewed again
In gentler mould, to be refined in fire,
As broken pottery with brass is beat
And melted o’er, and by experienced hand
Reshaped in vessels for the use of earth
And ornaments within its temples fair.

IVAN

“Flee from the wrath to come—Eternal death
In coil, as hidden serpent, waits to spring
Upon its lone and unsuspecting prey,
Who warned by an involuntary sound
Still stubbornly persists in hastening on
Into the very poisoned jaws of death!
The tree which bringeth forth bad fruit is cut
And cast into an all-consuming fire;
Its substance then is changed to gaseous form
Which mingles with the mysteries of air
And takes perchance another form of life
More hideous. What if the soul condemned
To death takes on another form of life,
Reincarnated, loses but the light
Of memory; no greater punishment
Than such eternal death would be to live
Forever in the fiery pit of Hell:
The joyous memories, the sadder ones
No more to call to mind, a mother’s face
Or that of one adored, to recollect
No more the happy days of childhood fleet,
Or those of later years, to be engulfed
In that forgetfulness, eternal, dread.
What punishment more horrible to man?

“Flee from the heresy of wicked men
Enchained by error’s strong and galling link,
And flee the storm of war which madly drives
Within its wake. O come with me to-day
Returning to the fold, the ancient fold,
The faith that stood in need a friend to those
Who early suffered in the catacomb;
The fold of God, the only one secure

IVAN

From those attacks from out the gates of Hell.
Beware of those who come as prophets false,
And go about as wolves the innocent
In ravenous manner to destroy! Beware
Of prophets false! Why follow one who raved
Of earth's approaching end, and madly sought
The holy Emperor to dethrone? The world
Yet moves in life from mighty throne above;
The Vicar of his Lord yet rules the hearts
Of men; but where is he who raging taught
Such heresy? Where is thy Leader bold?
The soul of him now cries in deepest Hell
For cooling drop, as Dives did of old."

'Twas thus Cajetan spoke to angry mob
About him surging in the village street,
So desolate in barren plain beneath
The distant walls of Oelmar dark and high.
'Twas thus the monk proclaimed the heresy
Of those who heard his sermon loud and clear;
And at its close the silent multitude
Shrank back in fear, as though a sacrilege
Before their very eyes had been commit.
The darker knight from off his sable steed
In fury sprang, within his eyes the flame
Of hatred leaping wild and high. With sword
He clove a way through angry villagers
Unto the holy men. Then cry on cry
Arose. In storm of wrath their fury broke,
Unbound the chains of murder in the heart,
And shriek of witch with hoarser curse of man
In madness rent the air. The very earth
By hate was shaken to its fiery deep

IVAN

And seemed to cry aloud, with murderous hand
Upheld for crimson blood of holy men.

Two soldiers bound the unresisting forms
Of those who had calmly stood in solemn robe,
And through the cursing mob by halter led
They marched behind the lord of Oelmar, who
In frenzy raged: "Beneath the very walls
Of Oelmar these, the cursed followers
Of him who sits upon the scarlet throne
Have dared unto my vassals here to preach,
Endeavoring now to change their noble faith
In Leader bold, that great and holy man
Who braved the world and stood in glory forth
Proclaiming to the soul its freedom high
Above the will of any man. They dare to stand
And teach below my father's very tomb,
Which shines above within the castle high.
He fought and died for Leader and the right,
Who strove to overthrow that mighty hand,
To crush that scarlet one, the tyrant, down
To degradation deep, and to a death
More ignominious than the vaunted cross.
If now his silent ears might hear them preach
From marble vault he would break forth and fight
Again the wicked might of Emperor bold."

As through the rabid mob the holy men
In bondage cruel were led, insulting hands
Upon them laid, by halter stained with blood,
With curse and blow, expecting to be rent
By demon-guided hands, and suffer there
In martyrdom for true and holy faith;

IVAN

The other knight with cross-emblazoned shield
In anger swiftly came, but calm and deep,
Protesting loud against the sacrilege.
Dismounting from his steed he loosed the bonds
From holy hands, he drew the halters from
Their sacred throats, and on his gallant steed
He placed the aged one with gentle care,
And by the other's solemn side he walked
In barrier of his knightly mail and shield
To flying stone and curse, to all the hate
Which stirred the angry hearts of villagers.
Thus in protection kind he shielded them
From every harm until the iron gate
Of Oelmar rose before the travelers.
But black its sable lord in anger rode,
In disapproval, speaking not, although
His heart rebelled at action of his friend,
Whose beauty bright he loved to gaze upon.

V

The sun was sinking far into the west,
The bright and golden, hot, midsummer sun.
Its ray descending drank from atmosphere
Of thirsty earth below until the green
Was drooping scorched on ancient forest tree,
And o'er the winding road from out the east
Ascending to the moat of castle old
And grey, there hung a cloud of circling dust,
Which whirling rose upon the summer air.
The dusty road to Catherine, who gazed
From turret window high, was steep and lone
As when the morn had cast its sultry ray
Of slow increasing light upon her head,
Bowed in despair and utter weariness.
Upon the window seat she wept again
As softly as the sigh of moaning wind
And clasped her white and trembling hands, upraised
Her tearless eyes to hot midsummer skies
And mountains high that gleamed beyond the clouds.
No candles burned; the suffocating air
From off the moat in stagnant pool below
Arose in vapor's thick oppressive heat.

“My tears no longer flow, the fountain deep
Within my heart has weeping been consumed;
The bitter gall of woe no water has
To mix with its increasing flood. Burn on,
Thou ceaseless fire, as dagger in my heart,

IVAN

Consume the soul in hideous despair,
And drink from mind the memory of joy.
Thou dread and hot, oppressive day, too long
Upon the sky thy lurid flame hath burned,
And withered all the earth. Descending now,
From thirsty plain and yonder mountain high,
Shake off thy deadly charm. O let me live
Again, and breathe the cool, refreshing breeze
From off the far and silent sea again.
For cooling drink from that delightful well
Beside my pleasant home so far away;
If one sweet draught I could in pleasure drink
Perchance this dreadful weight of sorrow would
Uplift its gloom from my embittered soul,
Would leave my heart to find its peace again.

“O thought more terrible, and black as night
Which rends my widowed heart in ceaseless fear;
Suppose my child, my only one on earth,
So innocent and pure, and glorious
In youth, so like an angel fair and bright,
Who rode away that glowing morn in Spring
So long ago, should in the evil hand
Of wicked man be caught and done to death.
My darling from the power of the dogs
Defend; release his beauteous soul from death,
From bonds of night. Put forth thy mighty hand,
O God, and save his soul from punishment
Of death and Hell. Thou art so mighty, strong
Above the little earth, the sea, the sky;
Thou hast a dwelling place beyond the stars.
O Thou whose gracious hand controls the sea
Of all the universe, refuse me not.

IVAN

Defend my Ivan from the Evil One
And leave him not to die within the spell
Of death that's ignominious and dread.

“What can I do but weep and wildly pray
To Thee, and break this woe-embittered heart.
That he had died in days of innocence
And gone to Heaven then while he was pure.
What if my heart had broken then with grief,
Not half so terrible its sorrow deep
As that which rends me overburdened now.
No more assurance comes that he is safe
From every harm, that he is innocent
And lives to-day as true as long ago;
Instead, a mystic spell of terror hangs
About my weary head, as angel form
Which will not speak that which my heart divines.
O Virgin, pale and fair, I will return
Within thy halls to worship once again
If thou wilt guide my little Ivan home,
And save him from the hand of wickedness.
In pity hear my plea, thou mother sweet
And fairer than the morn, and let my child,
My only one, return again to me.”

Afar upon the way, through forest green,
By many stately trees upon the road,
A cloud of dust arose as if a throng
Advanced from barren village in the plain.
The sun sank farther down, and from the marsh
That distant lay beside the river wide
The birds ascending shrilly cried, in search
Of shelter high in gloomy forest tree

IVAN

Before oppressive night should wrap its cloud
In mystic thralldom o'er the languid earth.
A terror strange had fallen on the heart
Of Catherine, as spellbound to the east
In apprehensive fear she gazed upon
A numerous throng advancing up the way.
It nearer came; she saw through drooping trees
A horseman dark, attired in sable hue.
"Ivan is come to thee again," a voice
In sorrow whispered in her ear, and filled
Her silent heart with fear that undefined
Oppressed her as in terror of the night.

Mechanically she drew a silver horn
And blew a clarion note which echoed far
Below in music through the silent halls
And winding corridors. A servitor
Responded to the call, and swiftly down
The stairs departed at her low command,
Arousing from its sleep the castleway.
Wide flew the iron gate, and drawbridge down
With noise of distant thunder rolling fell.
O'er gleaming moat the warden hurried forth
And solemn stood to meet the ascending train.
Below the servants hurried to and fro,
The noise of oaken door resounding deep,
The clang of wooden shoe upon the floor;
In preparation all their master proud
To greet with joy and celebration meet.
Some kindled fire a banquet to prepare,
While others lit the hall with candles bright
And brought by fading light of ending day
With hasty step the wines from cellar deep.

IVAN

In terror's charm above knelt Catherine.
She saw her noble son, ascending proud
The castle way; on scornful face no smile,
No happiness or joy at his return;
But sullen gloom, as though a heavy spell
Of sin and sorrow o'er him deeply hung,
The joyous face of youth who went away
Transformed to that of night. Where was the air
So gallant of his boyish purity?
It seemed that sin had wrapped in heavy gloom,
In cloud of scorn and woe, his solemn form,
And kept with some unholy spell the joy
From noble face, the light from veiled eyes.
What prisoners were those so darkly brought
With hands enchained! Appalling sacrilege
That holy men should follow in his train
As captives of the war in fetters bound!
As turned to stone, the form of Catherine
In grief looked down upon the changing scene
Nor hurried there her noble son to greet.

VI

Upon the castle high of Altenstein
In splendor shone the bright midsummer sun
Of noonday in its calm and brilliant peace,
In beauty radiant down within the mist
That scarce distinguished rose from river deep
And far below, whose silent waters ran
In swiftness by the overhanging walls
Of castle high and white of Altenstein;
Where white the gothic minarets arose
As if exalting from the earth below
The holy cross surmounted on each white
And gleaming spire, and dim and fairy-like,
Composed of stone, the high Byzantium walls
With bright and airy balconies appeared;
The solid battlements and towers round
As some gigantic tree from forest old
Set light upon a mountain's higher crest
Which rose abrupt beside the river wide.
Beneath the gardens lay in summer green
Luxuriant, where many elm trees,
Gigantic, ancient, formed a dusky screen
Before the castle's entrance, splendid, white,
And gleaming in the radiant atmosphere.

Within a sheltered, cool, delightful place
Of highest garden fair, where myrtles grew
In fragrance, glowing white upon the air,
And all about the clinging vines were thick

IVAN

And hanging low to meet the olive green,
The deep sequestered beauty of the lawn,
A child in robe of white with rippling hair
As darkly golden as the deep-toned sky
Of early morn which rises glowing o'er
Some stately northern isle in grandeur white
With snows that lie in virgin purity,
Sweet wondrous eyes as dark and innocent
And calm as morning star with holy gleam
In radiance down upon the mystic isle,
Cornelia stood in childhood loveliness,
In joy upon the myrtle's fragrant bloom
With rapture gazing sweet. She was a child
Who loved the calm and peaceful solitude
Of delicate flowers and the elm trees
Which bending down about her pleasant path
Gave shelter where the angels guarded sweet.
They were companions, silent but in word,
Which strove to shield her with a gentle care.

From where the myrtle bloom in festoons hung,
A child who seemed an angel from the skies
Stepped forth and stood so bright in radiance
Of noonday sun, in fear Cornelia shrank
In apprehension back and placed a hand,
A little fairy hand, against the form
Of tall and trembling elm which stately stood.
As pure and dazzling white as fragrant bloom
Would seem if it should mortal form assume,
The other stood in peace. Her eyes were blue
And sweet as misty summer skies o'erhead;
Her angel face as pale as lily bloom,
With long dark hair which seemed reflection dim

IVAN

Of that mysterious gloom which emanates
In sorrow from the Heavenly mansions fair;
She stood, and round her long seraphic robe
A golden light in tranquil beauty shone,
Which seemed to take a soft material form
Of golden wings extended to the earth
On which she rested in the light.

She spoke, as sweet as harp's undying tone
That golden echoes in the corridors
Of marble, in the voiceless halls of time
Below the gleaming walls of Paradise:
"Be not afraid. My name is Madeline,
A lowly one who dwells in Heaven's far
And stately halls, come down to wailing earth
On pilgrimage with Michael and his hosts,
Who flaming bright has gone to Oelmar's hall.
Come, guide me through this fragrant garden way,
While I to thee a secret will unfold.
How white thy little hand! It seems as pure
And cold and like the ones of those who dwell
As my companions in the snowy halls.
Entrancing beauty from thy smiling eyes
Now gleams, but O how pale thy cheek! Fear not
The lowly one who would converse with thee.
What is thy name? Cornelia? Sweet it sounds
And clear upon thy gentle ruby lips.

"Madeline is mine. In Heaven I am placed
Within the spacious court of one who dwells
Most pure, a glorious saint, who suffered much
Upon the way of pain; whose heart was rent
By that contrition deep which overwhelms,

When by the cross she stood a penitent.
She bade me promise thee that in the time
Which is to come, if ever thou shouldst be
Afflicted, or desire a favor much,
The grace of God to help a friend in need,
Most fervently to ask her gentle aid;
And if it be according to the will
Of Him who is thy gracious Lord and mine,
It shall be granted in the course of time.
You ask if I have seen that glorious One.
Yes, many times, for daily in His courts
Have I with countless angels knelt to praise
And glorify His name, His majesty
Omnipotent, and in His presence high
Have offered up the adoration sweet.

“I saw him first when as an humble child
I suffering lay upon a restless bed
Of pain and sleeplessness. Then in the long
And endless hours of the night when he,
My earthly father, faint with watching fell
Beside me in disturbed and weary sleep.
With broken sigh and suffocated moan,
I thought His sweet and gentle face in love
Gleamed in the dark and lit my wretchedness.
His holy voice in sweet encouragement
Commanded me the suffering to endure.
The affliction deep a little longer bear.
He promised me a golden crown of life
Unspeakable in glory of the light.
When death with bright and golden hand unbound
Affliction's chain of earthly torture dread,
I found the suffering bitter was designed

IVAN

To bear upon my father's wicked heart
And turn him to his sovereign ruler high,
Unto his God again, whom he had lost.

“Once only did I see His face in gloom;
When all the beauteous ranks of Heavenly courts
Were thinned as though the million stars had gone;
For seraphs then on journey of import
Had hastened to the frenzied earth below.
There was a deep and holy gloom within
Those peaceful halls, there was a note of pain
In seraph hymn; and when I knelt below
The Master's golden throne, I heard His voice
As summer wind in sorrow, murmur, ‘Lost,
And with him countless millions fall.’ The tears
Were streaming down His face, and when His eyes
In sadness gleamed upon me kneeling low,
While swiftly bright returning angels came
In speechlessness from wailing earth below:
‘O little Madeline,’ I thought He said,
‘Were all thy sufferings on the earth in vain,
And useless all thy woe? Forever lost,
As Lucifer who darkly fell below
In swift avenging cloud, creating Hell?’

“I marveled then why all the company
Of angel hosts were kinder than before,
If that were possible. Supremely now
In happiness I dwell, and satisfied,
An angel in the highest Heaven bright
And glorified. At times I marvel why
My father stays so long upon the earth,
Nor leaves the changing sky to dwell in love

IVAN

With those who rest in perfect peace above.
But hark! Thou hearest now, Cornelia sweet
And fairest child, that clarion note which rings
Across the hills and snowy castle walls,
As silvery bugle in the early morn?
Now Michael calls for me. Returning home,
He speeds from gloomy halls of Oelmar far,
Where dark-remembered loom its castle walls
In forest evil haunted. Goodby, sweet
And mortal child, in Heaven we shall meet.
Remember thou the message brought to thee.
Reveal it not; the secret holy keep."

Beneath the high and glowing castle wall,
Above the green of vine embowered way,
The myrtle flowers bloomed in purity;
The ancient, high, majestic elm trees
Mysteriously were whispering in the breeze
Which softly from the mountains high and white
Had kissed Cornelia's pale and snowy cheek,
And brought the faint perfume of Heaven from
The peaceful, far, and glowing skies of blue.
Within the air the music of a voice
Seraphic lingered low and passing sweet;
But to Cornelia's anxious eyes appeared
No angel form within the radiant light.
Awhile she stood and gazed in speechless joy
Upon the high and snowy myrtle bloom.
Where lay the green and vine embowered way;
But Madeline had vanished in the ray
Of summer sun which softly streaming down
Withdrew its golden gleaming light before
A silvery shining cloud upon the sky.

IVAN

She hastened then unto an arbor near,
O'erhung by long and dusky purple vine,
Upborne by marble columns green and high
Reflecting in their beauty glowing bright
The dancing spray of fountains far away.
She found a maiden delicate and white
As myrtle blossoms in the morning dew,
Reclining on a green and marble seat.
Her hair had fallen down amidst the gloom
Upon a snowy robe composed as that
Which is the holy dress of Heaven's queen.
O'ershaded by the arbor's dusky green
She seemed to dwell mysterious and high
Within a place above the thought of man;
Her face, angelic, pure, in study bent,
Within her dark and glowing eyes serene
The chaste and purple beauty of the vine
Incarnate, shadowed, dimly seemed to dwell;
A daughter of the house of Altenstein,
Sweet Adelaide in youth and loveliness,
In glowing beauty of a princess fair,
Inquiringly from ancient Latin scroll
Looked up into Cornelia's glowing eyes;

Who paused respectfully beneath the shade
Of emerald arbor green and covered o'er
With long and dusky purple flowering vine.
"O sister, saw you not a wondrous child
Called Madeline? She came from far above
The sun emblazoned sky, in beauty fair
Descended to the earth, and as we strolled
Beneath the elm trees by castle wall
She told of Heaven far in mystery,

IVAN

And brought a message to me, secret from
All ears but mine. She was so beautiful
And bright within the glowing sun, yet sad;
It seemed she mourned her father on the earth,
Who grieved so much o'er her untimely death.
But suddenly, responding to the call
Of silvery horn upon the fragrant air,
She passed away toward the gloomy wall
Of Oelmar far, to join the seraph hosts
Who linger there in battle for the right;
After which I saw but fair and holy light
Descending from the spires in glory high,
And sought in vain for smiling eyes of blue."

The gentle voice of Adelaide replied
In awe and wonder at the other's words:
"No one with thee I saw, beloved child,
But now recall the sun more brightly shone
About thy path in mystic beauty down.
I heard the seraph's note, and all the air
Was filled with melody inaudible
And strange as glorious songs of those who dwell
Above; entrancing sweet the music came
Across the garden high, as in a dream
The seraph hymns of Paradise are heard
So faintly in the high and glowing air.
But come, I'll read to thee a story old
Of beauteous silvery angel who appeared
To Thobias, a youth as beautiful
And holy as the radiant ones who serve
In priestly robes about the altars high
And white, who bow in adoration low
Before the gracious Lord, who glorified
Is worshipped in His holy temples bright."

IVAN

Upon a marble chair which rested wide
And glowing, richly carved in white, amid
The deep and cooling shade of summertime,
Where marble columns high of emerald hue
Supported arbor vine in green luxuriant,
Cornelia listened to the story old,
Related in the glowing tones and sweet
Of Adelaide. The bright unclouded ray
Of summer sun was slowly sinking down
Within the west to walls of Oelmar far,
And to the east the tall majestic shade
Of elm trees was creeping silently
And slow, as if in stealth to flee the light.
But ere the flaming sun had slowly reached
The mountain high beyond the forest deep
And woe-inspiring castle walls afar,
A messenger across the river wide
Sailed swiftly o'er its dark and rippling tide
And anchored by the river gates below.
He leaped in haste from trembling boat and blew
A clarion note on huntsman's solemn horn.
The drawbridge fell with loud and heavy sound
Across the river moat, the iron gates
Were caught and opened wide to Percival.

He bounded up the winding marble stairs
And by the green, o'erhanging terraces.
His knightly robe was of an emerald hue
And wrapped a form of boyish innocence.
His hair contained the slightest tint of gold;
His soft and dreamy eyes of emerald blue,
Reflecting faintly green of summer day,
The whiteness of his solemn face enhanced.

IVAN

In knightly hand a golden helmet bright
With soft and waving plume he held secure.
A golden sheathed sword in splendor hung
In circling beauty from his girdle bright
Above the green of tunic to his knee;
Below which shone his closely fitting hose
And golden buckled shoes of quaint design.
About his quivering throat, low-bordered, white,
A golden chain with crucifix of pearl
Descending hung within a holy light,
And o'er his broad and graceful shoulders swung
A silver horn, designed for use in war.

Before the arch that led to arbor green
He paused and looked to blue midsummer sky
As if he spoke to One who reigns above;
Then entered silently, in joy beheld
The snowy maidens deeply occupied
In mystery of the ancient, Latin scroll.
They heard his steps when by a column high
And green he stood in beauty tall,
And spoke in voice as sweet as river's flow
Upon the far and changing hills of light:
"Ivan has returned. Before a sable train
Of vassals, on the mountain far away,
I found his might returning from the war.
In majesty he comes, in secrecy,
As though to war upon his native land.
It grieves my heart to tell the sacrilege
Committed by his hand. Two holy men
Are bound within his castle dungeons deep;
And Catherine bids thee come to Oelmar's hall
And strive with love his reason to restore."

IVAN

As pale as silent death the startled face
Of Adelaide against the flowers grew,
Which hung in purple light above her head.
With frightened eyes she gazed on Percival
And searched for any hope which lingered in
His solemn face and smile of greeting fair.
Upon her countenance was writ the joy
Of him returned, exalted in her heart,
But overshadowed by increasing fear
For safety of his soul, as in the west
Declining silently the summer sun
Was covered by a cloud. Assurance none
She found within the other's solemn mien,
And from her holy face the joy had fled;
Within its place an all consuming fear.
In agony she breathed a fervent prayer:
"O most compassionate, my mother fair,
Remember Ivan now, and deign to cast
Those beauteous eyes of mercy on thy child.
In time of need, O Virgin pure, to thee
I fly, before thy sacred feet to fall,
O mother, hear, and intercede for me."

VII

There was a garden by the sombre wall
Of Oelmar high, a garden desolate
In solemn loneliness, and low it stood
Revealed beneath the green of ancient tree
By river flowing from the mountain side.
There stood a pine which grew to wondrous height,
As column straight and hewn from marble brown,
Until it reached a balcony above
On window ledge within the castle wall,
Where branching in three limbs of equal length,
As mystic trident forms a rod of three,
It towered on in majesty until
It reached with whispering leaf the very hall
Of turret frowning high in massive strength
Above the highest tower in the wall.
Below it grew a tree of evergreen
Which cast a sombre shade o'er darkened earth.
No flowers grew, save myrtle in its bloom
Of purple mystic in the heavy gloom
On graceful white and slender gleaming stem,
Which cast a solemn radiance on the air.

Beyond the dark and beauteous array
Of purple bloom which hung above the high
And overshadowed wall, the river wide
Between its cool and marshy banks of green
Lay rippling in the sun's declining light,
Which poured its thirsty beam in languor down

IVAN

As though to drink the dark and rippling tide;
And from the marshy pool or purer flow
Which mighty rolled to far and endless sea,
To where the hastening cloud of summer blue
Advancing sought in swift, inconstant flight
The mountain peaks to shade, the vales below,
As brilliant mirage o'er a desert bare
Gleams faint and far defined in mystic glow,
Fair Altenstein appeared in grandeur high
Against the summer sky, in waters deep
And rippling far below; so like the halls
Of Paradise, that o'er its portals white
And on its high and gleaming spires a host
Of angels bright in beauty seemed to dwell
And stretch protecting hand o'er all the realm.

Attired in robe of black, in stately fold,
Which trailing down upon the solemn green
Appeared reflection of the castle wall;
Beneath the purple bloom of myrtle tree
A lady stood and gazed with beauteous eyes,
O'ershaded by a hand so delicate
And snowy white it seemed amid the gloom
A cloud of beauty, on the gleaming spire
Of distant Altenstein, which glowing bright
Appeared a peaceful mansion in the sky.
Her hair was soft and snowy white beneath
The purple bloom and seemed to lightly blend
With slender beauty of the myrtle stem,
Against a bough of which she sadly leaned
And rested there a white and trembling hand.
For messenger's return, dispatched at noon
In eager haste to Altenstein, she gazed

IVAN

With tearful eye, but patiently, in woe
And grief because the one she revered so,
Her only son, should be without his faith,
And curse religion in its every form.

As thus she stood in sad and anxious mood
A deep familiar step upon the green
Was heard, and by her side there solemn stood
Ivan, tall, in youthful beauty dark,
And lovingly, his eyes of deepest blue
Which shone with tender gleam revealing pain
And mental suffering, a remorse concealed.
“Why standing here, sweet mother?” he inquired,
“Why gazing to the misty mountain side?
Is not thy treasure here, returned to thee?
O look on me again as when a child
Before thee standing I upheld a face
As pure and fair as myrtle flower bloom
In mystic purple beauty of the morn.
Turn not away, so pale, with broken heart.
The tears are coursing down thy snowy cheek,
And dim the eyes which shone so bright in love.
What fault hast thou to find with Ivan here?
What crime have I commit that thou dost turn
In sadness from thy child, the only one
Who loves thee on the earth, or Heaven far?”

Almost the heart of Catherine was won.
How could she long resist the pleading sweet
Of Ivan, beauteous, her only child,
Or coldly turn from him with solemn face,
Refusing words of love an egress from
Her trembling lips. She slowly turned and placed

IVAN

A mother's gentle hand upon his two
So fondly clasped; the tears from off her eyes
Fled swiftly as the light from out his own
Sweet eyes of blue descended on her face,
As stars of evening shine upon the gloom
And wield a spell o'er all the solemn earth.
But far the silvery note of Percival
Was heard upon the air, and swiftly on
The river's rippling flow he gallant came,
Returning in a barque with snowy sail
Across the river wide to Catherine.
Upon the grate of dungeon deep below
Her glance in startled manner fearful fell.
Remembering those who lay in prison deep
And terrible, and low in gloom of night,
Again in trembling haste she turned away
A face which shone in tortured agony.

“Listen to my pleading once again,
Dearest mother, hearken to my voice.
My heart is torn with grief that thou shouldst turn
In gloom away from me. Thou art so pale
Beside these purple flowers, fragrant sweet,
In robe of sombre black, so delicate,
So frail it seems beneath this myrtle bough.
Thou grieveest much because I tarried long
In service of the King. My heart is moved
To solemn tears, with bitterness is filled
That I have caused thee woe. Engaged I've been
On matters of import and consequence
And could not hither come, or even send
Consoling word; for with the enemy
In battles violent the kingdoms rage

IVAN

And even now a victory's imminent.
The forces high beyond the mountains are
This very night departing to the war.
They go against the one who would enthrall
With grinding chain, the heart, the mind, the soul
In bondage deep, and cover all the earth
With tyranny from out the gates of Rome.

“Why dost thou turn in such despair away,
Sweet mother? I have failed to understand
Thy pale and tearful woe, the welcome cold;
Thy smiles are not as those of mother love;
And now within thy heart an anguish deep,
A mournful reticence I have discerned,
Which makes me grieve for having caused thee woe.
I follow in the steps of father brave
Who fought for freedom of the heart and mind,
Who strove and died a martyr to the cause;
Whose soul we hope forever dwells within
Those mansions fair beyond the starry skies.
Why startest thou so wildly and in fear?
Thine eyes expectant turn to Altenstein.
Can aught of good come from those pompous halls,
Those walls upraised to One who had no place
To rest upon the earth His kingly head;
Who went about, companion of the lame,
The common poor, the leper and the blind?
O better for the world it were to sell
And give unto the poor that brazen hall.

“I follow in thy steps, for in thy youth,
According to the wish of him who lies
In lonely white sarcophagus above,

IVAN

You taught me to uphold the freedom of
The will, the only standard of thy god;
To fight for liberty as Leader strove
Against the Emperor then, the binding chain
Of institution arrogant to break.
But I, a stubborn child, still fondly clung
To olden faith, for then it seemed to me
A bulwark of the right, a dwelling place
For those who struggle on against the will;
But wiser have I grown. Such faith was good
For simple youth; its fiery place of Hell
Where tortures dim and dread would rend the soul,
If faithless on the earth, the demons red
With cloven hoof and hideous eyes of green,
Its terrifying pit of punishment,
Would gain obedience of the frightened mind;
But older grown I see the folly now
Of such belief. I cannot worship One
Whom I have never seen upon the earth.

“There is no Hell, no place of torture deep
Beyond this hopeless life. The suffering’s here;
For God is light and never would create
A place so black and hideous as that.
There is no Evil One, beguiling here
The heart of man, who striving to destroy
Enwraps him in a heavy cloud of night,
In proud conceit, or bold indifference.
The reason for thy sadness I’ve divined,
And grieve that it is so. In prison deep
The men of sable robe, within the cell,
The dungeon low, were striving to regain
The vassals who were faithful to thy lord,

IVAN

And fought the enemy which now is near
Beyond those mountains in the higher plain.
They preached that Leader's dwelling place is Hell.
The proof I ask; or they shall die in chains.
Sweet mother, I implore, turn not away;
The war is imminent; by death perchance
I fall to-morrow. Say that I have done
What pleases thee; forgive me now, and seal
That pardon with a mother's sweet embrace."

Almost the heart of Catherine was won.
How could her son commit an evil deed?
Perchance the doubt, the anguish terrible,
The thought that all was wrong in Oelmar's hall—
A sacrilege to prison holy men—
Temptations were, insidious and dark,
To lure the mind to further realms of woe;
And so it was, she almost now believed,
As turning to her child, his pleading eyes
She saw in deep transcendent blue, his bright
And rapturous smile of sweet expectancy.
Her trembling hand was placed upon his throat;
Her heart in love gave way before the flood
Of pleading from his lips; almost a kiss
Of pardon was upon their sacred mould
Impressed, when sharp—the clear and silvery note
Of Percival beneath the river wall
Rang forth a warning on the summer air
Surebarged with heat, and heavy in the calm
As though expectant of catastrophe;
And from the dungeon's lowly grate was heard
The moan, the chanting of its prisoners.

IVAN

As up the stairs of marble water way
Came all in white the form of Adelaide
It seemed the air was filled with heavenly strain
Of music low and rapturous sweet as that
Of angel choir above the darkened earth.
She seemed in snowy robe the embodiment
Of all the peace that clothed in beauty deep,
Unchanging hung upon the lofty spire
Beyond the glowing walls of Altenstein.
Her dark appealing eyes were glowing sweet
As morning's purest star which hangs enwrapped
In veil of night before the amber dawn,
And modest, hid beneath the lashes long.
With graceful step and o'er the solemn green,
Advancing in the gloom as flowers glow
In some sequestered place of forest deep,
She came in youth and innocence to greet
The startled ones. About her queenly brow
A purple diadem of flowers hung,
Wound weirdly sweet and strange in mystery;
Cornelia's hand entwined them fast
Around her brow within the arbor high.

"Thou art as welcome to this garden dim
As morn's first trembling ray to eyes of those
Who sleepless all the dreary night have watched
In deep unceasing pain for dawning light,
Which comes as peace upon the wounded heart
And brings a calm refreshing to the mind.
Already hast thou heard the joy which fills
These sombre castle walls. Too soon, alas,
Perchance it will be turned to mourning deep;
The wanderer has returned but to depart.

IVAN

Dost thou not hear that solemn horn afar
Upon the air beyond the mighty hill
That stands majestic in the crimson light?
Almost I seem to see a host of men
Who armored march and bear the standard high
Of brightly flaming cross. Against his faith
Ivan goes to war; thy kinsmen to destroy.
In strife he contemplates to drive them forth
From provinces within his jealous realm.
But hark! A voice which calls by yonder wall
Is Percival's, who searcheth now for me.
Remain awhile, dear Adelaide, beneath
The myrtle tree. I will return anon."

So Catherine in solemn tones and low
Embraced the other, whispering in her ear
A parting word which brought to startled eyes
Unholy fear, and to her blanching face
A tint of red; then o'er the solemn green
In black descending robe, departing slowly
By the gloomy trees of evergreen,
She came to gate within the eastern wall
And from the garden vanished from the sight,
As sombre shadows of remorse depart
From human hearts where enters lovely peace.
Upon a garden seat of darkest green,
In restfulness beneath the purple tree,
Reclining, Adelaide, with eyes of love
Which darkly gleamed in purity serene
Consuming in their depths the myrtle's gloom
And changing it to light, looked fondly up
Into the deep and solemn eyes of blue
Which strangely down o'er her in sorrow gleamed,
As though reflecting purple of her wreath.

IVAN

Her voice was low and sweet as music in
The summer rain, which falls in soothing peace
Upon the sombre green of garden low
Beneath a sky, where rainbow's purple hue
Predominates above the silvery gleam
Of aspen tree, whose stately branches glow
Beneath the dancing leaves. Afar the sun,
Revealed in darkened beauty of a cloud,
Sank slowly to the west, appalling red;
And o'er its bloody face of terror deep
A passing scene of changing silhouettes,
Composed of castle weird, descending group
Of bare and shattered trees, of mountains high
And low ascending plain which barren shone
Amid the ruin, presaged a terror wild,
To clutch with evil hand the fearful mind
Of man, and in his heart commotion stir,
Reminding him of that appalling woe
And deep and fiery horror of the all
Destroying flame which cometh at the end.

“Can it be true? Ivan, hast thou renounced
Thy ruler's faith, and turned from God above,
Who on thee smiled in deep transcendent love?
I cannot understand. I deemed it false
Until thy very lips had spoken it,
And yet the heart cannot believe it true.
It seems to me the bright intelligence
Of thine a veil has hidden for a time;
Uplifted soon, unto thy tortured mind
It will reveal a brighter glory than
Of joy unknown to eye of mortal here.
Thou art unhappy, so unhappy now

IVAN

And strangely different. I know the cause;
For in the olden time the sacrament
So holy was a consolation sweet;
The Sacred Host descended in thy heart,
Enwrapping all thy soul with purity
And peace for thy disordered mind; but now
That mystery thou canst no more believe?
Thy truant mind's revulsion made it so,
Because of some insidious strange intent.

“Thou canst no more believe a place as dark
As hideous and dreadful deep as Hell
Was made by Kingly hand which rules in might
The circling universe; thou thinkest that
The soul of man returns unto the earth
To live again, embodied in a form
Of fairer mould, resembling that of light.
Thou canst not hold it true, and doubtst then
That God unto the earth could come and dwell
Immaculate? Beware! For ever when
The Enemy of man would subtly kill
His true belief, the arrows darkly fly
Against that fair and glorious one who crushed
In victory his black rebellious head
As serpent's to the groaning earth. Beware!
For in a cloud he hangs above thee now
And strives thy tortured mind to overthrow.
His subterfuge is great, and to the one
Unskilled in knowledge of his dark deceit,
His thought appears a glowing light, as in
The hand of man a worthless bauble gleams;

“A thought inspired and cunningly devised
By him, who covers o'er the hidden snare

IVAN

For mortal soul, as stealthy huntsman far
Within a forest dark and terrible
Heaps dying leaves upon a deadly trap.
What if the soul again is incarnate
Upon the earth—the memory must be gone,
As madman's mind dethroned, or idiot;
No more recalling those beloved in
The olden days, a mother fond and true,
And others seeming dearer to the mind
In after years, the treasures of the heart
No more beholding in the time to come;
Oblivion's endless pall the life to hide;
To die, remembering not, eternal struck
From off the proud and glowing earth as once
From Heaven fell upon Gomorrah's wall,
Upon the city fair of Sodom's plain,
A flood of fire and stone, effacing those
Who wicked dwelt therein, believing not.

“What sin so terrible within thy heart
Which drove thee from thy God, and made His light
Appear obscure, repulsive to thy mind?
Thou knowest why the olden faith is lost,
As priceless jewel in the sands of time
That stretch as desert bare upon the earth.
O search for it and strive again to find
That gift of faith, within which wondrous light
The error now which creeps upon thy mind,
So dark, will swiftly flee as night before
Triumphant ray of morning's brightest sun.
Wilt thou not search for it? Remember what
A holy gift it was to thee in days
Of happy state, when fair and innocent

IVAN

Thou sawest in the night the faces black
Of those who unseen strive to gain the soul
Of struggling man. Thou knowest what is lost,
As mother does a child, who now has gone
Astray in path of wickedness; who once
Was pure and white as flower of the morn."

With earnest voice and tender, Adelaide,
Inspired by angels, pleading from her heart
And smiling with the might of beauty on
The one she loved, appealed in innocence
To every sounding chord within his heart.
Awhile she paused to press on tearful eye
A kerchief white as snow. In western sky
Ascending terribly a storm arose,
A far oppressive roar of thunder deep
And ominous resounded in the air.
Arising swiftly from the garden seat
She extended snowy hand toward the storm:
"I can no longer stay, for see, the cloud
In yonder scarlet west appalleth me
With nameless fear. Hast thou a scapular?
O, then, wear this. Ivan, I love but thee;
Thy guardian angel through my feeble voice
Now speaks to thee; O wear it for my sake.
If thou refuse, I pity thee in time
And all eternity. Farewell. Farewell."

In haste he seized the scapular and gazed
In love upon the mother's face thereon
Above a little Child, whose hand was held
As though to place it on a faithful heart,
Enrolling it within the army bright

IVAN

Of fair and glorious Queen of Heaven crowned
And Lady of the Earth. He folded it
With tender care and gently placed it on
His throbbing heart, as lover's sacred gift
Is treasured dear and often gazed upon.
In solemn tones he spoke, as though in pledge
Of olden faith: "I cannot wear it now,
But will respect and keep it for thy sake;
Request no more of me, dear Adelaide."
In disappointment then she looked afar
To where the dark ascending cloud arose;
Again a solemn roar of thunder pealed
In dreadful reverberation on the air.
She waved a snowy hand and hastened down
The winding way to where a servitor
In patience held a white and trembling sail,
Abruptly leaving Ivan in despair,
The myrtle tree and garden desolate.

VIII

Below the haunted hall of Oelmar, deep
Within its dungeon dark and terrible,
Beneath the wild and stormy river's flow,
In gloom of coming night the prisoners were,
The holy men of God with hands enchained;
Within a cell the ministers of right,
On whom the frenzied hand of evil lay,
The persecution of the fallen earth;
Their mournful chant accompanied by the sound
Of water's dismal roar and clanking chain
About their clasped hands descending bound
As though to drag the holy form to earth,
And in the bondage of despair degrade
The very soul. Against the reeking wall
One leaned despondently, in terror deep
Of howling air, the waters overhead
That raging dashed in frantic storm against
A grated window high, as though in hate
In wildest fury to destroy, to rend
In seething flood of waters turbulent
The shaking cell, the prisoners bound therein.

“O brother, see how wild the storm doth blow,
And dash in fury down upon the wall;
The river's raging foam is red with blood
Of warriors done to death. O hear the wind
Which drives in evil storm the demons here!
O listen to the sound of thunder deep

IVAN

And far away! It hastens o'er the sky,
Advancing to the strife. What means the night,
The terror ominous which darkly hangs
Above my woeful heart as heavy wall
Of sombre stone, or grim, gigantic tree
That stands within a forest wild and lone.
And groaning hesitates before it down
To degradation deep is battered on
The sodden earth, to cast the shattered bough
In death upon the frightened soil again,
Its gnarled and ancient root uptorn in wild
Symbolic woe. O see the vivid gleam
Of lightning o'er the gloom! What horror waits
Within these frowning walls: a martyr's death
Before the very mouth is bitter held.
The strongest demons have in fury forth
From fiery gates of Hell ascended now
To drag us down into the endless pit.

“Last night I saw in vision deeply sweet,
Within the glowing halls of Altenstein,
As bright and glorious as the Heavenly smile
Of seraphs in the morn, as gentle as
A form of mother bending o'er a child
In peaceful slumber deep, an angel form.
It was a fair and holy monk arrayed
In cloak of purple hue and golden brown.
Upon his brow a royal diadem
I saw, a shining band of gold in sweet
Simplicity about his tonsured brow
In solemn purity was bound. He seemed
In calm protection o'er the sleeping form
To bend. He smiled serenely bright as though

IVAN

To courage give, prepare me for the day,
And strengthen me for trials of the night.
No more beholding now his holy form
In love and purity; terrific night
Has driven him afar. O where is he!
The heavenly one who guarded every step
Through all the summer day, o'er mountain high,
In wild deserted plain, or village low
And desolate? He hath fled before the storm."

So Ferdinand, as pale as lily white
Within the castle marsh, cried out in voice
Of woe and terror at the coming storm;
But o'er the prison floor Cajetan strode
In meditation undisturbed and deep.
His lips in rigid hue of marble white
In solemn chant were moving in the night,
And in his hands a crucifix was held.
"Fear not, for God is o'er the prison cell
That deepest lies. The God of Israel
Omnipotent doth reign; the same who brought
Us forth from bondage of the Egypt plain
And set upon the brow His sacred seal
Forevermore. In vain the demons rage,
In vain doth man his puny schemes devise;
For who is like to Thee, thou Mighty One
Of Heaven's circling zone, the tiny earth;
Who holdeth in Thy hand the keys of death
And deeper Hell. Behold thy God and mine
Upon His bright and starry throne above
The frenzied sky sits calmly in His might
And slumbers not, but keeps with hand of love
His children lone within the stormy night.

IVAN

“Behold, I can by exorcism deep
Unbind in flaming Hell the spirit there,
The very soul of Satan in his might
And all the legions circling round his throne
Command to come from out the fiery gates,
And writhing in the mystic spell present
Themselves to me. If thou dost doubt the word,
Remember that the Lord once drove from out
The souls of men the demon’s form who cried
In terror at His word, and fled before
His holy feet into the salty sea.
Upon the forms of those who follow Him,
Who love and do His will in purity,
The mantle of His power rests divine.
Fear not the storm of hate which rages o’er
Thy unprotected head, in fury now
Descending in the wild tempestuous night.
From every crime committed on the earth
Some good is wrought by holy hand of God,
As from a lowly marsh of fear and woe
The lily stainless lifts its petals white.”

IX

The sun sank down in glowing sea of red
Which filled the west in bloody horror deep,
The weirdly black and woe portending sky
With frightful spell of terror ominous,
As all consuming fires that lie enchained
In smouldering red and waiting forth to burst
In deep volcanic flame with scorching breath
In whirlwind high the wicked earth to wrap
In countless zones of frantic, lurid fire.
Against it stood in death's appalling gloom
The dread, the mighty circling castle walls,
The towers and the turrets of Oelmar,
With battlements as strong and prison like
And grim as everlasting halls of death.
Below, the winding, wind-swept river lay
As mighty serpent writhing in its pain,
With scarlet folds uprising hungrily
And scales which quivered in a loathsomeness
Of terror deep. It beat against the stone
Of castle old with dull tempestuous roar,
The sound of many waters deep, as though
In swift destruction to envelop it.

Within the walls the dull echoing noise
Of many feet along the corridors
Resounded wildly running to and fro
In consternation and the nameless fear
Of that unfathomed deep portent of ill

IVAN

Which rides within the wake of thunder-storm.
The clash of gleaming sword, the heavy sound
Of oaken door, the clang of armor bright,
The harsh appalling noise of prison bar
Transformed the dark and ancient haunted halls
Into a place of preparation wild
For battle imminent within the night.
The hoarse and strident voice of armored man
Rang loudly o'er the walls: shrill rose the cry
Of women desolated and forlorn,
And tears were streaming from their circled eyes.
The strife inspiring voice of war had called
As thunder's mighty roar upon the peak
Of rugged mountain high, discordant, hoarse,
And crashing loud as sounding cannon of
An enemy, which rising in the night
Appalls at morn its adversaries dim,
Who flee amidst a storm of bursting shell
And rending iron chainéd cannon ball.

Within the haunted council chamber stood
The lord and master of its ancient, proud
And gloomy walls, the glory of its might;
The scion of a race descended from
The olden kings, inheritor of that
For which the worldly monarch strives; the joy
The only hope of mother's wounded heart,
The pride of rude and earth stained vassalmen;
The object of dismay to one who stood
In gloom beside him in the darkened hall;
The secret love of one more fair than these.
So Ivan stood in direful, frowning mood,
His gleaming sombre eyes of deepest blue

IVAN

Rose not to gentle face of Percival,
Who on the ledge of window, iron barred
As prison's all securing wall, reclined
And gazed with frightened eyes upon the scene
Below where madly scarlet river ran
In wild tempestuous flood of terror deep;
But wandered moodily across the floor
To narrow opening in the blackened wall,
To where the steps in darkness leading down
Revealed a place of terror dark and dread
As gloomy night of everlasting Hell.

For battle's woeful din and death he was
Arrayed in garments black as solemn spell
Of wild and all destroying night which gleams
From woe appalling eyes of sorcerer,
Which in the shadows clung mysterious
About his unresisting form, so tall,
So straight, and yet so sadly piteous
In that concealéd misery of a heart
And noble mind approaching to the wreck
Of demon's restlessness. A sheathéd sword
Descended from his sombre girdle broad
On which a hand of snowy white was seen
Which bore a gleaming ring; the other rose
To waving hair and darkly wrinkled brow
Beneath which glowed the thoughts which subtly
craze

A noble mind and drive the tortured heart
To nameless cruelty. Awhile he stood
The distant noise unheeding, pitiless
And cold as grim unhallowed form of death;
Then with a movement slow he turned toward

IVAN

The other gazing from the window high
In apprehension on the scene below.

In swift confusion turned the youth to meet
The sombre eyes in beauty on him fixed;
In that affection calm and sweet he placed
A loving hand upon the other's arm:
"Ivan," he spoke as tenderly and clear
As song of shepherd boy above the storm
Which looms in terror o'er a summer sky:
"The prisoners are below. Shall they remain
Within that deep unhallowed cell of night
To suffer in its dark and changeless gloom,
To starving grow within that awful place
Emaciated in the prison wall
As those who walk about the parapets
In phantom shade and weird unholy light,
Along the dim and winding corridors
In lone and grewsome hours of the night?
If so, their spirit forms perchance will greet
Thee in such manner when thy solemn step
Returneth from the war, victorious,
Again to Oelmar's hall; and thou shalt find
Below the gleaming skeletons enchained.

"For thee my very life I would lay down
So willingly, thy slightest wish obey
And hasten gladly to perform. Command
Whatever thou shalt wish, and it is done.
I do not hesitate my friend to please.
Upon thy heart I rest my weary head,
Thou'lt not refuse thy little Percival
One wish, so easily performed, so slight

IVAN

That all thou hast to do the wish to grant
My saddened heart to joy is let me take
The golden and the iron keys which hang
So heavily from thy sombre girdle broad
And do with prisoners which they guard below
In dungeon deep and lonely as the pit
Of everlasting Hell what pleases most
The heart of Catherine, the dearest will
Of Adelaide so fair to look upon.
Thy beauteous eyes with kisses I will close,
The instruments of pain I take from thee,
The cold and iron keys of prison deep."

Almost unloosed the chain whereon the keys
Hung heavily, almost a heart had won
The battle raging in the air, unseen.
When swift a vivid and appalling flash
Of lightning rent, terrific, prominent,
The gloom of night, and deafened was the voice
Of Percival. The roar of thunder loud,
Discordant, broke the spell. In fear he shrank
Against the other close, who calm and cold
As immovable ices of the frozen north
Drew with impatient gesture from the embrace
Of Percival; with mighty oath exclaimed:
"By all that's good, I will not loose to thee
Those ministers of Hell in dungeon deep.
For presumptuous falsehood shall they suffer there
A martyr's death, and never be released
Into such hands as thine, for thou wouldst heap
But favor on their ignominious heads.
In prison shall they languish until death,
Or renouncing error be my vassalmen."

IVAN

As hoarse as thunder's distant roar his tone,
In anger deep as dread appalling night.
His hatred of the prisoners had increased
And darkly raged the sullen bitterness
Of venom in his heart. He proudly stood
Embodiment of night's ascending gloom.
As struck by savage blow from hand beloved,
The other stood in dim reflection of
The vanished day's reluctant scarlet gleam;
His beauteous eyes in disappointed woe
Appeared in bright and stormy blue, and on
His snowy face the crimson blushes played
Of love rejected, pleading cast aside.
In speechless grief he seemed a soul adrift
Upon the raging sea of dark despair,
To float forever on its solemn tide,
As flower delicate and beautiful
In storm of grief, in wild and lonely sea
Of hopelessness, afar in tempest tossed
Upon the dreary sobbing tide of woe.

In quivering voice, as jangled minor bells
Rang out amid the coming storm of eve,
He wildly cried: "O woe to stubborn heart!
This night, unfaithful one, this very night
From out thy castle gates a friend more true
Than all the deep unending skies of blue
Departs forevermore, and leaveth thee
To rope and chain of angry demons such
As in thy heart now rage, in wild despair,
To iron chains more strong than those which bind
The holy men, more galling to the mind
And cruel to the heart; and even now

IVAN

They cut as sword thy wounded soul and drive
Thee on to deed more cruel and terrible
Than ever rose within this haunted hall.
O shame upon thee for the sacrilege!
The inexcusable and maddened crime!
I have not dared reproach thee for the sin
Till now, expecting by the hand of love
To save thy foolish soul, to bring thee back
Into the glorious hall of liberty.

“But now all hope is gone, all joy for thee
Is dead. Go proudly forth alone to war,
From which thou’lt nevermore return to gaze
In exultation o’er thy prisoners here;
Thou’lt ne’er return to torture them again.
Thou’lt never see thy mother’s face, Ivan,
Nor clasp with love the hand of Adelaide.
The curse of God shall on thee blighting fall,
And waste thy form to death, accursed one,
And send thy soul rebellious to its Hell.
O shame on thee for leaving such a God!
And fighting in thy feeble strength against
His holy will. Misguided simpleton,
Dost thou not know that he could mighty strike
Thee down, and as with brass asunder break
The unavailing chain; could cleave thee as
The sword of death strikes down the helpless one;
Could shut thee up in prison house of woe
Until is paid with grief and pain the least
And penitential farthing thou dost owe.

“O strike me not, thou faithless one, accursed!
The cross which I have worn in secret now
Shall gleam above my heart, exposed in pride

IVAN

Forevermore. I see thee shrink before
Its calm and holy light, as Satan flees
The sacred and protecting sign. How well
It must, reminding thee of happier days
When thou didst wear it o'er thy stainless heart
And knelt before the altar where it gleamed,
Recall to faithless heart the treasure sweet
Which brought its peace to thee. Accursed thou
For leaving such a God, a Friend so good
Who ever gave to thee in mercy deep
His boundless love. O sacrilegious deed!
Imprisoning in a dungeon vile and deep
His representatives upon the earth,
Subjecting them to torture of the chain,
Starvation and the river's fearful flow;
To prison them within a gaol, perchance
To be o'ercome with stormy tide and drowned.

“To me a priest was ever holy and
Devout, a chosen messenger of God,
Above all other men, and of His love
And boundless power, representative;
Who holds within his hand the golden key
Of Heaven and the darker one of Hell;
Who bindeth where he will and looseth not
The guilty king, the thief, the murderer,
Nor any one who standeth stubborn, proud,
Or high, and unrepentant of a crime;
To be respected and revered; but thou
Hast shown by service who thy master is.
Could Judas have committed such a deed,
Such black, appalling, sacrilegious sin?
Remorse for crime soon tore his faithless heart,

IVAN

And when to death his Master was condemned
In wild despair he threw the dreadful price
Of Hakaldama ringing down upon
The high priest's marble floor in scornful wrath
And fled in woe unto a traitor's death.

“But thou art cruelly hard as adamant,
Realizing not that demon's hands are thine,
That life destroying heart controls thine own,
The power of the reign of Baálzebub.
Farewell. In gloom below a deep-toned bell
Tolls out the cold and unresponsive knell
Of parting day, and sorrow desolate
With solemn mystery clouds approaching night.
Farewell, whom I have ever loved till now,
When faithless furies rend thy traitor's heart
And chain thy reason to the halls of earth,
In blindness to the loathsomeness of death.
But if in penitence thy heart should turn
Again to God, and thy forsaken creed,
Thou'lt find me in the halls of Altenstein.”
With one long look upon the other's face
Which flamed in silence as the scarlet wave
Below, in gloom, with frightful grief and woe,
He strode from out the haunted hall and down
The winding corridor, and from the walls,
And left its master silent and alone;

And with him fled the last uncertain gleam
Of dying day beyond the rugged, dim
And black ascending veiled mountain peak;
And in his stead advanced the grewsome shade
Of death, unfolding from its mystic shroud

IVAN

The horror of the night, and loosing from
The sable fold the spirits of its reign.
With end of day the strife inspiring noise
Of war, the muffled clang, the subdued cry
Of armored men along the corridors
Was hushed in ghostly solitude,
And left its lord and master standing lone
But for the deep and wild mysterious gloom
That shrieking hung in silence o'er the scene.
No sound but that of dull, tempestuous roar
Of river mighty raging far beneath,
Unseen in violence. A silence deep
As death had fallen on the hall, and night's
Unfathomed woe upon its solemn wall
Enthronéd sat as raven terrific.

Alone to mortal's vision dim, but not
Alone, for in the black, appalling air
The scarlet form of mighty demon hung
And angry raged in dark Satanic war,
In frenzy tearing at the mortal's robe
And striving with the fiendish thought of hate
A restless mind to wreck and overthrow,
Or swiftly to destroy the tottering throne
Of reason high; to send a mortal soul
In torture to the deepest pit of Hell.
Upon the bloody floor, the ancient wall,
The beam of window turretted and high
It clung in frightful shape in loathing wild
And shrieked aloud, discordantly and hoarse;
Its writhing scarlet arm, the claw-like hand
Extended, as a serpent coiled to spring
Upon its unsuspecting prey, toward

IVAN

The one who strode across the heavy floor
And frowning strove to still a throbbing heart,
In mind to calm a surging sea of wrath.

From chapel door, along the corridor
Which wound by many a sounding door there came
In proud and solemn queenliness the form
Of Catherine arrayed in sombre robe
Of sable hue; a gleaming tear was seen
To trembling course upon the snowy cheek,
And fall in bitterness upon a hand
Which glowing held a candle blessed for
The stormy night. She paused and listening in
The silence deep which rent the heavy air,
Discerned the heavy sounding tread of one
Who paced in woe the darkened council hall;
Then hesitating not she hastened on
By ghostly gleaming passageway until
Before the quivering candle's holy flame,
Uplifted high, the creatures of the night
Were chased reluctantly and frowning wild
From narrow passageway, the ancient wall,
Through window turretted and high, and fled
Before her steps as darkness from the light.

Beside her form in stately silence moved
The presence of a great archangel bright
And holy as the flaming sword he drew,
Extended in the ray of candle light.
As white as snow which gleams in altitude
Of dreamy high midsummer mountain peak
His flowing robe, which parted half revealed
The armored form of knight, reflecting gold

IVAN

Of morning sun arising o'er the east.
His face, his gentle hands, his armored feet,
Were delicate and white as lily bloom
Entrancing sweet which opens in the air
Of morning o'er the hills of Paradise,
And on his noble brow in power shone
The diadem of stars in silvery light
Entwined to signify his sovereign reign;
But in his eyes as innocent and pure
As dark mysterious ones of stainless youth,
Who going forth to war in morn of life
With smile of hope and step of purity,
There shone the beauty of the seraphim.

Before him wildly fled the demon's form
To black and dread concealing night without,
When Catherine deep in woe and silence paused
Within the open door and gazed upon
The haunted gloom of dark, oppressive hall.
The angel's hand unseen and beautiful
Was raised in benediction o'er the one
Who frowning stood: descending from it shone
A wondrous light, which, penetrating deep
The restless mind, supported reason there
And made it shine again with steady light,
Restored in beauty that intelligence
Which rises o'er the agony of time.
In penitential mood he raised the hand
Of Catherine then unto his scarlet lips
And from her took the holy candle bright,
Conducted her unto the sable throne
Beneath a massive window iron barred
Which rose toward the walls of Altenstein,

IVAN

Revealed at intervals by vivid gleam
Of lightning o'er the thunder's further crash.

As groping blindly in the fearful gloom
Catherine on the sable throne was seated high,
She murmured low her heart to fortify:
"To him who overcometh on the earth
A crown of life shall be in Heaven fair;
He with the Lord shall dwell eternally."
Unto her son she whispered through the night:
"I come again to plead in love with thee;
Thou'lt not refuse again, beloved one.
Remember, Ivan, who it was that brought
Thee forth to happiness of life on earth.
Sleep, unreturning, from my weary eyes
Hath flown, and left in bitter doubt and woe
My aged and restless heart which throbs anew
In fear and pity for thy prisoners;
And for their sake I suffered in a dream
And found them servants of the highest God.
What if they wear the foreign robe of priest
Despised, to them a reverence is due.

"Draw not away. I have a secret deep,
But have revealed it not till now, in vain
Believing that thy penetrating eye
Within the fairer would discern the youth
Who was thy friend, companion in the days
Of childhood—Ferdinand, the brother of
Sweet Adelaide. Be not amazed, for that
I tell thee is the truth indeed; and now
I do not even ask thee to release
The holy men, or loose the galling chain

IVAN

And send them free to walls of Altenstein
Within its high and gleaming halls to dwell.
Accord them but an opportunity
To prove the truth of bold assertion made
So publicly, that in the deepest Hell
Reclines the soul of him, thy father's guide
In matters of the faith, who strove with war
To rule the hearts of men. Refuse me not.
I am thy mother and command it now,
Or nevermore, thy proud allegiance.
Deny me this request and I will mourn
For thee within the halls of Altenstein;
Abjure the power of the golden ring
Its subtle charm, I gave thee when a child."

Afar through weird black night came dismal sound
Of thunder rumbling hoarse and ominous
In storm of night oncoming slowly down
The river's winding way. In silence stood
Ivan, pondering deeply o'er the solemn words
His mother spoke, in calm, unbending mood.
Before him rose the face and form of one
Belovéd in the days of long ago,
The eyes of clearest blue of Ferdinand,
His gentle face as beautiful and pure
As whitest petal of a lily resting on
An altar of his God omnipotent;
His youthful face with bright undying hope
Transformed in light, as dewdrops change and glow
Impearled upon the whitest rose that blooms
Unfading in the courts of Paradise.
That face had lately gazed on him in love,
Unrecognized within the form of priest,

IVAN

Whose gentle mien, humility and love
Had but increased his hatred, bitter, deep.

No word he spoke, but drew a silver horn
And blew upon it loud, echoing note,
Which fainter grew and weird, resounding down
The winding corridors. A servitor
Responded to his call and hastening fell
On bended knee in dark and armored might.
“Bright lights!” the master cried, “disperse the
gloom,
And bid the keeper of the dungeon deep
Bring up his proud, rebellious prisoners now.
To-night they shall be tried within the hall,
When storm of warring elements contend.
Let Him they serve their only refuge be.
I swear they never shall go hence until
Is proven to the lord of Oelmar and
His vassals here assembled blackest lie
That ever rose to lips incarnate on
The burning earth; or die the foulest death
Within the darkest cell of punishment.
I’ll brook no scorn, nor opposition to
The will inherited from him who lies
Within the white sarcophagus above.”

To Catherine who was sitting on the throne
Of ebony, blown by dread increasing air
Of thunder-storm, it seemed the quivering light
Of candles borne along the corridor
And shaded by the hand of servitor
Increased the gloom, the mystery which hung
Upon the atmosphere of council hall.

IVAN

As heavily she leaned upon a hand
In woe a pale and throbbing brow, it seemed
The Heavens fought in battle for the soul
Of Ivan, who was striding up and down
Before the sable throne. In speechless mood
He gazed upon the oaken floor, as though
To penetrate with dark and glowing eye
Its black material to prison deep,
Where bended low in silent gloom of chain,
Imprisoned by the iron bar of pain.
Two captives lay within the solitude
And fear of flooded river which arose
So dark and wild above its winter bank,
And dashed in fury through the grating of
The archéd window high within the wall.

As up the winding stairs from prison dark
The keeper drove with curse the holy charge
A stormy wind of night into the hall
Came howling as a wolf which angry seeks
The helpless prey, and fiercely overthrew
In golden candlestick a quivering light,
Which dying fell upon the oaken floor;
And made the others wildly leap as though
By demon hand encircled in a spell
Of terror undefined. Dark overhead
In angry sky a low and warning peal
Of thunder broke in dull tempestuous roar
Above a wrack of clouds in fury blown
Unto the east, as though the chariot
Of Woden rolled above the elements,
And hoarse the trumpet call resounded on
The circling air, advancing in a storm

IVAN

Of battle imminent; while on the dull
And rocky shore beside the castle wall
The angry torrent beat of river wide
And high that shook the ancient, mighty hall
In warning of its violent despair.

“Your wizard spell, your necromancy deep
Begin, thou charlatan of hellish night,
And prove to me that Leader is in Hell,
Or by this sword the blood shall satisfy
For that insult the scarlet lie proclaimed
To vassalmen within my honored state.
Call up from Hell, from that consuming pit
What thou hast said is there, the soul of him
Who strove against the cursed Emperor,
The master of the gate which opens to
But those who bow in ignorance before
The invisible and uncreated throne.
Present his soul to me, thou madman, priest,
Bring forth the man from out his charnal place,
Produce from dark and narrow house the form,
What thou dost call the soul, of Leader strong;
His countenance from immaterial
Exhume in that which tangible is seen,
And even though in chains forever thou
Deservest but to lie, I swear that forth
From castle gate a freeman thou shalt fare.”

Cajetan stood in silence of the God
Above, who bendeth o’er the angry earth
In might supreme, and fearless heard the threat
Of death, invective bitter, raging hurled
Upon his wintry head. Intent he gazed

IVAN

With eye mysterious upon the face
Of Catherine, who had clasped in anguish wild
Her trembling hands of white in voiceless prayer,
Which rose from silent lips to glowing throne
Of Him who mighty rules above the dread,
The darkened fortresses of earth. He turned
In gloom toward the candles' quivering light,
While dark and low upon the oaken floor,
In shade of ebon throne his brother knelt
Below the blanchéd face of Catherine.
Above him shone in light invisible
And wondrous fair the angel with a sword
Of golden hue, protecting with his might
The servitors of God. His face was calm
And sweet, reflecting confidence of that
Omnipotent o'er all the stormy earth,
But on its light a shade of sorrow fell
For wicked one, for man's ingratitude.

As low upon the night in solemn voice
And dread, Cajetan slowly, dark, began
An exorcism awful, deep, and wild,
A fear upon the heart of Catherine fell,
Descended as a sombre cloud upon
The terror of the night. Increasing blew,
In weird accompaniment, the stormy air
With low and mournful shriek as though a soul
Condemned to death was on its circling flow.
A peal of thunder broke in fury loud
Above the hall; afar the draw with clang
Across the sullen moat in answer fell
With frightful noise, and open flew the gate
Of iron to the air. Again a flash

IVAN

Of blinding light descended on the wall
And dashing played along the buttresses,
Amid tempestuous roar of thunder's voice,
Of wild and rapid flow of river deep.
The portals from the wall resounding fell;
In fear the warriors fled into the hall
And crouched beneath its throne in awful fear;
But proudly stood Ivan alone and tall,
Unmoved within the storm of havoc wrought.

Again the crashing peal of thunder rent
The air and shook with reverberating noise
Foundations of the earth, and mingled with
Its mighty noise a hideous clamor came
Along the corridor, of iron chain,
The ambling tread of strange uncanny beast,
Which to the hearts of those who fearful knelt
In torture seemed the very sound of Hell
Upon the shrieking night. It entered as
A wolf, as black and horrible as sin,
A hideous wolf, and stood with flaming eye
Transfixing all who screamed in agony.
But vain the frenzied cry of vassalmen,
Consumed by howling noise of elements;
The hateful beast advanced in silence grim,
And on its sloping back a fettered soul
In pain and torture lay. The face was scarred
By flame of fire which burneth evermore,
The twisted hands were rent by chain that binds
Eternally the soul in deepest Hell,
And from its bosom sprang sulphureous flame
Of bitter woe, unending, deep remorse.

IVAN

“Who art thou?” The voice of dark Cajetan rang
In triumph o’er the sound of thunder crash.
“Leader!” A voice in deep sepulchral tone
Replied as though it came from frightful deep
Of Hell below. “And where art thou condemned?”
Again commanded solemnly the priest.
“I suffer in the depths unending pain
Which gnaweth as a fiery worm the heart—
Because I broke my vows, and was to God
On earth untrue, resisted every grace,
The pain by little Madeline endured,
And heresy proclaimed, I suffer in
The deepest pit of Hell forevermore.”
As some wild wind which blows in desert place
And weird upon the night, his moaning voice
Ceased with a sob of pain. “It is sufficient,”
Ivan cried, commanding: “Hideous wolf,
If thou art Satan fly before the cross
Which gleams above.” A blinding flash of light,
A sharp, terrific peal of thunder rent
The murky air, the candles by the wind
In dread confusion blown, extinguished fell,
And from the mortal eye the wolf returned
With him he bore into the pit of Hell.

There was a noise of feet advancing to
And fro, and loud there rose a mighty clash
Of armored vassalmen; and when again
The light of candles weirdly gleamed upon
The heavy air a thick sulphureous cloud
In circles scarlet red descending hung.
Within its dark and hellish glow arose
Catherine then and stood in queenly might upon

IVAN

The castle throne, extending snowy hands
In speechless agony toward her son,
Who stubborn in defeat, with angry voice
And frenzied cried unto the holy men:
“Go from these gates to-night, for thou art free.
Stand not and pray, but go immediately.
Thy pleading for my soul is useless now,
For in my father’s steps, departing to
The war, I follow him to death, and if
He be in Hell, that place shall welcome me.”
Departing thus he turned and darkly strode
From out the hall. Alone stood Catherine then,
But saved from death her deeply wakened soul.

X

“Thou dark and all destroying castle tomb,
Farewell. Thou woeful black and maddening walls
That raven haunted o’er my fancy loom,
With circling towers rude and high against
The gloom of pale and ghostly crescent moon
Which hangs above in mocking silence high,
And gleams in coldness down upon the earth
Through dreary mists that ever rise to wrap
In deep oppressive horror’s cloud the still
Increasing deadly terror of thy halls.
Thou ceilinged low and winding corridors,
Appalling black, with mazes intricate
And leading all astray; where circling bats
In myriads rise, infest the frightful air
And cry as poisoned demons writhing in
The pit of dark, oppressive heat. Farewell,
Thou dungeon filled with mire and death below,
Thou deep and hidden pool of torture black
And cruel pain; thou sacrilegious pit
Of malice and of crime; destructive net
Which subtly has enmeshed habiliments
Of hope and mystery, that which lures within
Thy hand the unsuspecting ones to death.

“Thou Babylonish hall wherein the harp
Hangs sadly mute and cold, in harmony
Untouched, or weeps discordantly when struck
By careless hand. Thou trembling walls that built

IVAN

But on the changing sands of river's wild,
Tempestuous flood are crumbling in the night
And ready now to fall; confusion's blight
Encompassed thee, conception of a mind
Misguided, such as once the circling plan
Of Babel high designed, and strove to build
With stone a path to God within the sky.
In strange presumption thou, fanatic, weird,
Upholdest spire material to Him,
Who disapproving sends confusion's mist
To hamper thee: unfailing sign of woe
And error's gloomy reign. How long will He
In mercy let thee stand so proudly there
Against His will. Until the raging floods
Envelop thee; or rather will He hurl
Destruction swift and terrible as rain
Of deadly fire and brimstone merciless
From wild and flaming sky o'erhead, to drive
Thy dwellers to a knowledge of the right.

“To thee I came one well remembered day
So many years ago it seems the cloud-
Veiled sun hath lit the days unchanging gloom
Through countless years. I sadly came a bride
To circling Oelmar's high and solemn hall.
O heartless wall, my beauty thou'st consumed
And left no recompense:—Disordered mind
And whitened hair which leaves no doubt of pain,
A widowed heart which cries again to thee
For days when childhood happiness o'erspread
A tranquil sky of calm, celestial blue—
Is all I have. Give back the joy which thou
Hast stolen from my heart, the perfect peace

IVAN

Of which my soul was robbed in cruelty,
The lonely hours sped renew with light;
Give back the hope I brought with solemn tear
Into thy black, appalling corridors
That I could please my God with worship strange
And cold, as heartless as the river wide
Which rushes by the low and trembling wall.

“I cannot weep o’er thee, for long ago
My allotted bitter flow of tears hath ceased,
And now I gladly stand with smile upon
A hollowed face, with hope awaking in
A tortured heart—’Tis all I have to give
To thee, returning all thy dread disdain
In spirit kindly, for in thy hall was born
Ivan, my child, my only one, so tall
And wondrous fair and proudly beautiful,
My consolation in the weary years
Which rolled so leadenly within a way
Deserted, barren in its grief. My son
Who now has gone to death, unto the war,
Parental care unheeding in his pride;
The child who knew no other home than this,
Who wandered sadly in thy corridors
And strove to clasp within his little hand
The pale, mysterious beam of ghostly moon
Which low, inconstant, gleamed upon the floor
From off the ramparts tall, as it doth now.

“Farewell, the dawn is near, the eastern sky
With dimly red and faint distinguished fire
Now glows afar; the ghostly moon with pale
And mocking gleam has vanished in affright

IVAN

Beyond the rugged prominence of peak
Which mighty looms in dread protection o'er
The wasted realm. The deadly mist of morn
Now creeps in chilly cloud upon the walls
And strangely glowing hides thy scornful gloom.
O trembling draw, o'er dark and haunted moat,
Let fall thy stubborn chain—the bridge of fear.
Beyond thee all is weirdly strange and cold.
I hesitate to plunge within its mystery deep,
But in thy jurisdiction all is woe
And fear and pain. But through the fading night
A calm protecting hand doth surely guide
My weary steps to higher throne of light
O'er dark tempestuous waters flowing deep.
Farewell, thou madman's dwelling place, farewell,
Farewell forevermore, for through this black
Unanswering night my faltering steps and slow
Shall nevermore return to thee. Farewell.

“Thou raven's nest, thou haunted den of fear,
Of creatures strange, unseen with mortal eye,
That ever cling about this mourning form
And strive to drag it down into the depths
Of frightful pain; no more in thee shall dwell
The heart, which disobedient is cursed
By frantic storm of doubt and raging flood
Of death which cries and sweeps with awful sound
About thy crumbling dark, divided walls
Which rude and high have trembled in the storm.
Sweet friends, support my weak and faltering steps,
For now it seems that dreadful claw-like hands
Invisible, reach out from horror's gate
To draw me back again into that place

IVAN

Of endless doubt and suffering in the night;
And in the way a black, repulsive cloud
Of fear issuing out the slimy depths
Of waters in the moat ascends to wrap
My form within its cold and deadly gloom.
Thou messengers of hope and mystery, now
Support and swiftly guide my faltering steps
To thy abode, where I may ever dwell
With Heaven's holy peace upon my heart.

“As one who sees a serpent coiled to spring,
In subtle fury hid beneath the way,
Its glittering eye, its countenance upon
The treasure of the heart, a golden bird
From prison bar escaped, where it was loved,
And flown away beyond the reach of hand,
Beyond the broken voice in danger wild,
Into the serpent's deadly charm of death,
Where now it flits in strange, uncanny spell
Above a very demon incarnate;
So I have stood and watched in agony,
In breathless silence seen the tempter weave
Its hideous snare about the soul of one
Within my heart, the flower of my life.
In vain I shriek, as madman o'er the brink
Of cliff precipitous, where coldly shines
In fear the moon o'er regions desolate;
My warning cry is vain; it cannot break
The spell of death which binds my little one.

“I know how imminent the languor lies;
For others in its desecrating spell
Have fluttered down to death before my feet.

IVAN

I saw them fall to death. Useless they cried
To me with pallid face for aid, through mist
Of demon's subtle breath, which veiled the end
But now above the form of serpent hangs
The dearest of my heart, in dreaming swings
And heedless in the spell of hideous death.
O must the grief which as a dagger rends
Be on my wild and suffocating heart.
O God! Is there no subtle way to loose
My little one; and must I helpless stand
As though involved within the deadly charm,
And gaze in madness on the spell of death.
Could ever Hell contain such punishment,
Or demon's mind the torture could devise
Which now o'erwhelms the mind, the broken heart,
And frenzied breaks in wild tempestuous pain
As storm upon the shore of rocky isle?

“No longer can I bear the sacrilege;
The charm which binds the treasure of my heart,
The child I love, so pure and beautiful,
So fair and white in youth and innocence,
O'er whom the angels smiled in beauty down
And stretch protecting hands in golden light.
Now! From my hands the binding links are free,
And from this house, this raven haunted hall,
My life shall go, returning nevermore.
For him I go to pray, for him my heart
Unceasingly will cry before the throne
Exalted in the hall of Altenstein—
Delightful home, where ever as a child
I wandered in the light. There will I plead
Before the mighty place for treasure of

IVAN

My broken heart, will pray that demon spell
Of Satan may be broken in the might
Of angels o'er him set to guard his feet,
By sword of light will break the charm and save
His treasured soul from out the gates of Hell."

XI

Soft o'er the summer sky an azure mist
In tranquil beauty rose and seemed to drift
As dreamy as a cloud of Paradise,
Ascending through the golden light of sun
From portals of the peaceful evening time;
In twilight's holy spell descending as
A veil upon the high and mystic walls
Of Altenstein, and wrapped the solemn scene
In glory of the reign of solitude.
The marble stairs descended wide and white
To river brink in garden fair and green
Where shone the stately trees against the sky
About a silvery fountain dull and blue,
Which seemed a chalice glowing high upon
A brazier by its seven pillars low
Supported solidly, that darkly red
Issued from circling base of sombre stone
Which rose from out the waters green beneath,
Where lilies grew upon a surface moved
By rippling waters from above, o'erflowing
Brazier in a music low and sweet
And mystic beauty of the dying day.

Around it stood in semi-circle high
A marble wall o'ergrown with ivy vine
Which green arose in clinging fashion from
The sombre earth; and in the circling wall
At intervals appeared an alcove high

IVAN

As though it was the door of silent tomb
Sealed up and scarce discerned beneath the vine.
On pedestal above each alcove high,
In stately marble urn there waving grew
The southern palm; and softly evergreen
Of stature low and circling stood before
The ending of the wall, in solemn hue
So delicate it nearly seemed a blue
Of strange celestial tint transmuted in
The fading atmosphere of dreamy earth.
Beside the entrance grew against the wall,
Which unobstructed gleamed in snowy white,
The rushes green from out the glowing south
That gave Egyptian tone to all the scene,
As though it sweetly shone in quiet far
Within the clime where islands of the sea
Arise in tropics beautiful and green
And warm beside the wave, a paradise
Of strange forgotten dream of long ago.

A seraph fair encircled in the fold
Of dark, descending robe in beauty stood
Beside the rushes green and high, and seemed
The embodiment of that entrancing spell
Which hung in silence of the tomb about
The solemn scene, and gave to it a joy,
A tranquil peace, as though the quiet end
Of life had come, and soul of mortal lay
In solemn state arrayed, awaiting but
The hand of angel messengers to bear
It far away beyond the evening sky.
His eyes were dark and pure, reflecting light
Of holy youth, alone and innocent,

IVAN

In beauty of the realm of Israel;
A halo glorious about his head
Shone in the fragrant air as lily pure
And white above the waters dusky, green,
And troubled in the fountain dark and weird,
Beneath the columns red. Invisible
To mortal eye his light angelic form.

With graceful hand a silvery lute was held
To lips so ravishing, so heavenly pure,
That to the notes which fell seraphic sweet
As snowy petals of exquisite bloom
In early hour of the morning down
On grasses cool and green beside the sea
Afar, impearled by soft and silvery dew,
The waters of the well in music low,
In rippling sweet accompaniment as though
From angel's heart a mystic minor strain
Was poured, descended with enraptured joy
From out the chalice high and smiling fell
Reluctantly into the lily pool,
To drift upon its tide forevermore
Away from voice of bright adoréd one.
So wildly strange and sweet the spell which hung
About his form, so ravishing the note
Of trembling lute upheld to smiling lips
Of light pomegranate hue of purity,
That those who might behold the seraph form
Of Raphael would in delicious dream
His beauty rare consume, and charmed fall
In deathless sleep before him, waking not
Until the wondrous strain had died away.

IVAN

So, faintly to the ear of mortal fell
His music sweet, pervading all the air
Of gentle summertime and mingled with
The evening sky in golden radiance,
Which shone beyond the grey of misty cloud,
Descending o'er the earth in quietude.
With solemn step of joy and wondrous air
Of holy peace, within the garden fair
Of Altenstein, at quiet eventide,
In solitude, serenely Catherine came
In robe of shining hue, the mystic scene
Possessed, in search of meditation deep,
Expressing happiness and peace of heart
In every stately movement of a queen.
She gazed unto the west with radiant eye
And dark, as one who sees within a dream
The glowing mansions of the Heavens fair
And those who dwell therein. She slowly bent
Above a fragrant lily blooming white
Amid the foliage green, the depths below
Where shadows of the night in mystery seemed
To darkly dwell. With peaceful mind she heard
The minor strain of sadness falling down
In low accompaniment to music faint
Descending from the lute of Raphael.

“How pure and white, thou lily blooming fair
And innocent above the waters flow,
As radiant as the form of mortal soul
At morning cleaved from every stain of sin
By holy sacrament of love divine.
Thou hearest every strain of music sweet
Within the air; thou art as different from

IVAN

The sombre stone, the waters dark beneath,
As mortal soul that's purified and free
From its appalling state of former time;
Now filled with wondrous grace descending from
The courts above. How lovely is the place,
And silent in its peace, how rapturous sweet
In all its joy! O let me ever dwell
In this delightful state which seems to be
A paradise compared to storm that's past;
And let me ever walk in this transcendent light
Which fills my glowing heart with deeper love
For Him, adored, who makes it so; for Him
Who saw the woe of poor misguided heart,
And in His pity held a loving hand
To rescue me from endless death, to gain
The holy pledge of sweet eternal life.

“I've passed into the garden of my King,
Again to bow before His majesty
In adoration sweet. How glorious
To dwell again within the sacred walls
Of purity, the ancient holy halls
Seraphic fair and full of glowing peace.
So must the prodigal when he returned
Unto his father's house have felt secure;
So must his faint and weary heart so long
Within a desert bare have leaped to find
Again affection's taper burning bright.
How grateful was he then, when on his hand
The signet ring of restoration gleamed,
When o'er his cleanséd form a mantle white
Was flowing placed, and to a banquet sweet
With reverence he came; how deeply felt

IVAN

Within his poor and weeping heart the joy
Which filled it then—Restored to former state
Of joy and innocence, uplifted from
The mire, as lily pure and white which glows
Beneath my hand, he scarcely realized
The Heavenly joy which welcomed his return.

“Now is my burden laid beneath the cross,
Down at the feet of Him who suffered there,
And I in love adore Him evermore,
Who rescued me from out the realms of night,
Exalted me, O most unworthy one,
To this delightful state of perfect peace.
He hath restored to me the innocence
Of childhood’s day, and given holy joy
Entrancing sweet which fills my glowing heart
With strange desire to worship in the courts
Of Paradise the One who honors me.
No more I sigh to drink from cooling well,
No more unheard in deep and fervent prayer.
He promised me, O most exquisite joy,
Those whom I love, in Heaven will be saved.
My Ivan shall return to Him, shall come
To me in Heaven fair, as pure as when
He fondly stood beside his mother’s knee
In days of purity. He shall return
To house of God. O rapturous joy complete;
He promised me, and promises will keep,
Hath spoken it and never will repent.”

As darker grew the sky, descending fled
The western light before the soft approach
Of calm and regal night which queenly wrapped

IVAN

In mystic veil the heavenly scene below,
Enhancing it with gleam of holy light;
And high in unseen spire of castle white
And glowing fair, a deep-toned joyous bell
Pealed forth the solemn knell of ending day
O'er twilight's peaceful hour descended on
The castle walls, and night's ascending reign
Confirmed in sway o'er far and dreamy earth.
It rang as though the hand of angel white
And heavenly strong gave voice to angelus bell
And chanted in a measure exquisite
Upon the sky. Surrounded by the peace
Of perfect love in glowing heart and mind,
Reclining on the brink of fountain deep
That rippled cool, and bending gently down
O'er lily white, in silence Catherine was
As strangely beautiful as mother seems
To those who wandering in an exile drear
Her memory treasures, in the time of youth.

More sweet the sound of strange seraphic lute
Descended as the golden light afar
Fled softly down the west and left the hand
Of regal night to draw its curtain down
O'er tranquil garden high of Altenstein;
And softly to exquisite blue the robe
Of seraph changed, as silvery sky adorns
With glowing stars its robe of azure deep.
His graceful hand as marble's solemn white
More brightly gleamed, and round his seraph form
The haloes shone. His eyes were wildly sweet;
His lute a clear and silvery bar which brought
From Heaven down a wondrous rhapsody.

IVAN

He sang of joy unknown to mortal's heart;
And as the entrancing notes upon the air
In beauty fell, he smiled a seraph smile,
Extending snowy hand in rhythm fleet
To the mystic air of rippling water song.
By fragrant lilies blown, midsummer wind,
By snowy marble wall and rushes down
Which bent in joy to touch his seraph form.

As trembling star that shone within the west,
Arising suddenly from out the weird
And changing mist, to shine in glory on
The scene of deeper mystery, there to light
Its growing gloom in beauty strange and wild,
On marble terraces descending fleet
From out the spacious, high, and holy hall,
In robe of blue as that of seraphim,
A glowing band about her golden hair,
Cornelia came as fair, as innocent
As Raphael, who gazed in wonder on
Her beauty rare, and saw the dreamy eyes
As glorious as his own, expectant, sweet
In rapture gaze upon the holy scene
By mystic night revealed. Unseen, the form
Of Catherine was beneath the fountain high,
Before the pillars glowing red which caught
Reflection beauteous from golden hair,
And harmonized in all the scene complete.

Cornelia paused beside the rushes green
Against the glowing wall, as grasses of
The mystic Nile, in waters flowing sweet
By strange Egyptian palaces obscured

IVAN

A little child of Israel in days
Of long ago. Before her shone the star
In smiling beauty down, above her stood
The seraph form of glorious Raphael
Upon a hidden pedestal beneath
The rushes green, whose mantle radiant
Of purest blue seemed mingling with the robe
Of fair enraptured child. Cornelia heard
His song, entrancing notes that seeming words
Upon the fragrant air descended down;
Which seemed to sink within the waters deep
Of fountain glowing green, to mingle with
Its rippling flood of minor melody,
Transforming grief into a perfect joy:
“For Ivan pray, that he from endless death
In mercy be released: for Ivan pray.”

XII

Furious the battle's dread onslaught and wild,
Where arméd man met arméd man upon
A low and barren mound which darkly rose
Above a marsh o'ershaded by the gloom
Of dread destructive fume of civil war,
Where dimly grew the lily leaf of green,
The blossom white above the poisoned flood.
Thick willows, bending down o'erburdened by
The summer vine that drooping hung and trailed
Upon the waters' slime, grew as a screen
To hide the low and secret dwelling place
Of serpent black which coiled lay with eye
Half closed, repulsive in a watchfulness,
To swiftly spring upon the heedless prey,
In frightful death devouring helpless one
Who came that way. Beyond the lowly marsh
The ancient, mighty forest lay beneath
A dark and clouded sky o'erhung by woe
Of battle's low descending holocaust.
The very gnarléd trunk and broken limb
Of raven haunted tree in horror seemed
To madly shriek amid the frightful noise
Of frenzied battle roar upon the hill
Which bloody loomed above the coming night.

The chains of might were struck from off the hand,
And, torch destroying, war in fury raged
As madman o'er the realm, enwrapping with

IVAN

The mystic shroud of red a scarlet host
Of mortals lying in the throes of death;
Of force opposing force within the sound
Of cannon's solemn roar, the ringing clash
Of bright and cleaving sword, metallic, with
Heartrending shriek of deadly wounded man,
Sepulchral groans of those amid the slain,
Upon their bloody brows the dew of death,
Their gasping breath as wind through strangled reed,
Their piteous eyes in glazed agony
Upturned toward the sky as those who see
In pain the charmed halls of death and Hell.
With bursting shell, o'erstrewn upon a field
Of riven stone, with cry of wounded steed
And suffocating fires terrific hue,
In clouds of deadly smoke which leaping grew
In volume dread, prophetic, weird, the strife
In fury raged, and demons fought with men
The earthly throne of God to overthrow.

Why do the heathen rage so madly o'er
The desecrated land, by famine torn,
In wild destructive war involving all
The nations in their frenzied battle strife?
What demon's thought arising in the mind
Barbaric makes the very sky grow dim
With shadow of despair? What armies come
Arrayed with sword and helmet of the night,
Habiliments of death and deeper woe.
Destroying now, they seek on earth in vain
To overthrow the mighty throne of God.
They fill the depths of Hell with prisoners bound,
Too late repentant of an awful deed

IVAN

Remembered black; too late in agony
Uplifting to the sky a bloody hand
Or supplicating eye in madness lit.
What horror for the soul that wrapped in death
Descends forevermore in fiery sea,
As though a mighty stone in galling pain
Was heavy bound securely with a chain
About the writhing neck, and dragged it down
To endless death. The terrifying shrieks
Too late, the soul's confined forever in
The chasm of a deep and fiery sea.

Above the battle field, as though on bough
Of dark and trembling cedar tall that rose
In deep solemnity beside the marsh,
Saint Michael stood arrayed in armor bright
Which shone upon the gloom as sunlight o'er
The heavy clouds, and scattered with a ray
Satanic hosts of night, with skillful hand
And swift, directing all the splendid host
Of angels bright who hovered o'er the din
And fought with demon horde arising from
The frantic earth. Where e'er a golden cross
Emblazoned on the green of armored knight
Or peasant soldier shone, and where a plume
Of snowy hue upon an emerald crest
Floated, the emblem of his purity,
Above a holy angel hung and fought
With mighty strength a demon shade of night
Which clung in enmity to crossless, black
And frenzied adversaries of the right;
And bore the souls of faithful to the skies
As solemnly as bier of stately king
Is borne to marble gleaming halls of rest.

IVAN

From out the rolling cloud, terrific, black,
The battle's dim and indistinguished form,
An emerald armored knight with golden cross
Emblazoned on his shield, with helmet plume
Adorned, of glowing white, was driven back
And slowly downward by the enemy
Unto the dangerous marsh. The snow-white foam
Was flying from his charger's mouth, who curbed
With iron bit was frantic in his fear,
And fought with valiant hoof and bloody teeth
For victory, his master's life to save.
But wearied seemed the armored hand, in vain
Equestrian might, for backward, ever down
Unto the treacherous march the helpless knight
Was driven by a score of horsemen black,
A solid wall before the armored twain.
One sword of blessed steel with many clashed,
Which by a skillful hand was wielded in
The confidence of right, protected with
Its might amid the flashing fire of steel,
Created spark, its owner's precious life.

At length upon the marshy ground beneath
The darksome cedar tree, the uneven fray
Seemed nearing to a fatal end for him
Who strove in hopeless might against the horde
Which overpowered him; and stood at bay
Until his hand should stricken fall in death.
Behind him lay the deep, o'ershaded marsh,
Wherein a grave with shroud of water weed
Was ready for his fair and youthful form,
Which sword-transfixed should fall into the slime.
But Michael saw with calm and pitying eye

IVAN

The woeful plight of him who bravely fought
Beneath his light, and bent with loving hand
His golden gleaming sword until it touched
The cross emblazoned on the shield below.
Then swift as shades in equatorial lands
Descend at close of day, a sable knight
Emerged from out the cloud, the deafening roar
Of battle's mad onslaught, appalling in
Its frightful clash, and speedily as wind
Rode swiftly ominous to rescue from
His own death-dealing men an enemy.

His ringing sword a pathway cleaved through
The horde of night until he stood before
The reeling form of Percival, who turned
Disdainfully and raised a flaming sword,
But let it fall when in the other's mien
No sign of hate was seen, but friendship, love.
Then swift before his martial fury fled
The warriors in a consternation wild,
Before their chieftain's sable, solemn might,
Surprised at his advent, and fearful of
Avenging wrath which burned in silence deep;
Save one who hurled in frenzied hate a spear
At cross emblazoned on the bosom pure
Of Percival, who in disdain let fall
His glowing shield. But swift the sable knight
Reached forth an arm to stay the instrument
Of death upon his dark and bloody shield.
It struck the steel, but glancing slipped and pierced
The mail. It reached his heart. He reeled and fell
From off Arabian steed, and heavily down
Upon the marsh's low and sodden green,
With sickening sound, despairing cry of pain.

IVAN

The other sat astonished, gazing down
Upon the dark and straight extended form,
Upon the fallen shield, the face thereon,
The strong and stalwart arm, now motionless
And still. He gazed upon the throbbing breast
And saw the venomed spear imprisoned there,
Where at each breath a stream of scarlet blood
Issued and darkly stained the sombre robe
Of dark and fallen knight; then swiftly sprang
From off his light and trembling steed and knelt
Beside the one who lay expiring there.
In gentleness he raised the helpless form
And strove in fear to stay the scarlet tide
Which slowly stained his robe and flowing down
Made pools of red upon the sodden earth
And crimson dyed the lilies blooming there.
In tenderness he kissed the brow of white,
And gazing fondly down with sight half dimmed
By flowing tears saw gleaming palely bright
The beauteous face of Ivan growing calm
And rigid in the bloodless hue of death.

Before Saint Michael's arm the enemy
In fear shrank back, as clouds of night before
The sun's bright ray, and in confusion fled,
What time their mighty chieftain fell, struck down
By traitorous hand of frenzied warrior.
Far through the clouded air the demons sped
In fear, with hideous shriek and howling to
Their dread abode on icy rock as sharp
As broken glass, where sombre iron door
Reveals the northern pole, the opening deep
To Hella's realm below the crusted earth;

IVAN

While those who bore the bright and golden cross
Opposing man on earth in terror chased
Headlong o'er the plain, who paused not
In fear to turn and gaze upon the far
And bloody field where comrades dying lay,
But fled in scattered horde the enemy
To swiftly 'scape. The victory was with right,
The followers of night were driven by
The winds to region desolate and bare
In solitude of forest's sable gloom.

Afar in sunset sky of scarlet hue
Saint Michael saw the spires of Altenstein
In solemn, high, and deep prophetic woe
Arise above the cloud, on which there shone
A gleaming cross of gold, emblazoned on
The azure sky; as with a snowy throng
And chanting loud the triumph of the right
He soon returning came to bear
From bloody field the souls of dying men.
But swiftly high on golden ray of cross
Descending from the spires of Altenstein
A white robed angel came with solemn sound
Of far and faintly tolling angelus bell.
The voice of Madeline, the holy one,
As beauteous as a rose of early morn,
Came through the evening light to Michael down
And bade him haste to solemn cedar tall
Where demons of the forest and the marsh
Were striving in their wicked might to gain
The deathless soul of him who lay so fair
And white in penitence upon the green.

IVAN

From out the marsh's depth a thousand hands
Of demons seemed to reach for precious soul
Of him who lay so near. Discordant, hoarse,
Their voices came in wild, derisive hate
Against the change in his repenting heart.
But round the dying one, descending swift
The angels circled in a barrier high
Of heavenly radiance against the sound
And sight of wickedness. The glorious Prince
Of angels stood in triumph o'er the one
Whose life was slowly ebbing to its close.
He touched the emerald knight with golden hand,
Who murmured solemnly in tones of fear,
And softly in a sobbing voice, as those
Who mourn, bereft of all that life holds dear
Or death can take: "Ivan, speak to me,
And say thou dost repent of all the wrong
Committed by thy soul, say but one word,
Or breathe a sigh, contrite for all thy sin,
Remorse but manifest, and He will hear,
In mercy grant thy deep repentant prayer."

As softly as the snowy petals of
A sweet and drooping rose are forced apart
In broken bud, his trembling eyes unclosed,
And solemn as the faint and mourning wind
Of summer night he spoke in trembling tones,
With pale and rigid lips: "I grieve—repent
Of all the wrong that ever I've commit,
Because the pains of Hell I dread, the loss
Of Heaven fair, but most of all because
The sacred heart of God in wilfulness
I have offended in the time of life.

IVAN

Have mercy then and save me now from death.
Why art thou here? My comrade, Percival,
The battle's thine and won, and I was mad
To fight against the holy Emperor,
Rejected now no more, for I embrace
With all my dying strength, my soul, my heart,
And feeble mind, the wondrous truth and light
Which now I clearly see, as crucifix
Of gold which thou dost hold with trembling hand
So close before my failing eyes—Farewell,
Sweet friend, farewell, for death comes down as
 night.
I die in peace with Him who loveth me.”

XIII

The moon arose in dread and flaming might
As though in golden beauty magnified,
From out the scarlet horizon, above
A cloud of battle's suffocating woe,
A remnant of the storm which wildly broke
So late upon the dark midsummer earth,
In fury spent; a dim reminder of
That fearful night, which in ascending gloom
And terror undefined will wrap the earth
In helpless consternation, circle it
With fire, terrific whirlwind from below,
All nations to destroy. In silence stretched
The plain beneath the scarlet cloud, in deep
And bloody gloom. The prisoners of the truth
Extended lay in death upon the field.
From silent lips there came no agony
Of dying grief upon the heavy air,
No movement of a hand, nor beating of
A heart, could be discerned upon the plain;
For all in dread and silent death was wrapped
In golden gloom of moon's ascending reign.

Dark rose a cedar tree below the plain,
Where weirdly shone the moon in silence o'er
The ghastly marsh, uplifting in its form
The mystery of death, the battle's woe.
Within its shadow deep was Ivan hid,
As broken reed upon the sodden earth,

IVAN

As reed by a child cast thoughtlessly aside;
A lily of the marsh, a flower pure
And fragrant, white, lay o'er his silent heart,
Reflecting beauty pale of snowy hands
Which lay in form of cross upon his breast.
His face in silent death was quiet as
The solemn night which wrapped the mystic plain
In scarlet beauty weird; as silent as
The night the sable mantle round his form
Was wrapped in sombreness which mingled with
The shadows of the earth: for he was dead
Upon the bloody marsh and veiled from light
Of golden moon ascending mournfully
And clouded o'er the bending cedar tree,
No more to rise in mystery of life,
Forever in the hands of voiceless death.

Dark glowed a hidden pool in marshes deep
And red with blood of those who ghastly lay
Upon the field above; about it fell
The thick o'erhanging reed, the trailing vine,
Which trembling grew as though a secret was
Of terror hidden in the scarlet pool.
As darker came the shades of evening down
Through early mists that rise beneath the ray
Of clouded moon, a frightful form arose
From out the dark and hidden pool of woe
A serpent hideous, distorted, black,
Arose through bloody element as though
From out the mouth of unsuspected Hell
In surface of the Earth. It was the form
Of sinuous Baálzebub, material,
Disguised in serpent's scaly subtleness,

IVAN

Anticipating soon to drag the form
And yet imprisoned soul of him who lay
Upon the earth, through grassy pool of blood,
To degradation deep and terrible,
To sink forevermore into the night.

Arising from its dark, mysterious den,
The serpent slowly crept upon its prey;
The slime of ghostly pool was dripping from
Its horny head, fell darkly on the reeds
That trembling bent beneath the writhing fold
Of demon black, in substance of the earth
Disguised, obscure to mortal's fearful sight.
Its dark, malignant eye with deepest hate
Was sparkling as the hue of scarlet field,
As on it writhed through fold luxuriant
Of trembling grasses tall and broken reed,
To solemn bank beneath the cedar tree
Where lay imprisoned yet the silent soul
Of Ivan fair. O for material aid
Its purpose to frustrate, to save from death
Imprisoned soul, to guard the helpless one
With armored steel of might! O for a hand
With flaming sword to cleave the subtle mask,
And drive the scornful head into the earth,
To break the spell of demon hate, to drive
It far into the abysses of the night.

It reached the bank, with glistening eye it raised
A diabolic head which closely scanned
The scarlet horizon, but shrank away
From risen moon as shadows from the light;
Then bolder grew and sent its body far

IVAN

And sinuous to the very mantle fold
Of silent warrior; but swiftly drew
In writhing back, as stung by silver light,
And coiled in pain, yet fearful to depart.
For on the lifeless heart, beneath the hand
Of snowy white a holy seapular
Shone in mysterious light, a radiance bright
Of silvery beauty from its secret fold
Ascended to the sky. Upon it was
Impressed the sweet and gentle countenance,
Seraphic features of that Lady fair
Who rules in glory Queen of Heaven bright,
Protecting with the might of purity
Through merit of her Son, from dangers of
The unholy night the soul which bore upon
Its deep repentant form her armour bright,
Secure from all the snares of Baálzebub.

Soon swiftly solemn o'er the sloping hill,
Within the sombre mist, in silhouette
Against the scarlet terror of the moon,
From out the silent west there weeping came
Three mortal forms arrayed in garments of
The hue of dread and wild descending night,
As guided by the hand of warrior bright,
Invisible above—Saint Michael's hand,
Who in protection hung above the field
Of battle, ghostly dim and terrible.
One shuddered as she passed the countenance
Of pallid hue, the rigid hand, the form
Of those who lay in blood forever still;
But hesitated not until she came
In silence to a well beloved form

IVAN

And stood in helplessness. His hands were cold, '
In death upon his brow the dew of night
Impearled shone faintly in the glow of red,
Ascending moon. No beating of the heart,
Nor sigh, escaped the lips. for all his form
By jealous hand of death lay wrapped, secure
From dangers of the earth forevermore.

XIV

Down on

The gleaming white and cross surmounted spires
Of Altenstein the sun in glory streamed
So dazzling bright that in the rippling wave
Of silent river flowing calmly down
To smiling summer vale luxuriant
In glowing green of field and pasture fair,
The castle was reflected to the view
As white and dreamy cloud upon the east.
A holy calm o'erspread the gardens wide
And high where myrtles cast their showy pink
And fragrant bloom, and lay as peaceful as
The holy dream-like mist in vales below.
Upon the quiet air the subdued cry
Of distant bird, the locust's shriller song
Attuned to minor melody of joy,
Came as a serenade from elm tree
Which towered high in solemn majesty
Above the quiet earth. There was no sign
Of storm which furious had lately blown
In whirlwind's desolating might from out
The sullen north; nor war's red holocaust
Upon the fearful skies of night; but scarce
Distinguished through the forest, dim and wild
The frowning black, the walls and towers of
Oelmar deserted seemed and desolate
In rugged gloom beside the darker stream.

IVAN

The light streamed down through gothic windows
bright

Upon an altar high and white as bloom
Of fragrant roses bending solemnly
In adoration sweet. Two candles burned
In soft and golden flames of purity,
Seraphic sentinels who guarded there
The bright and golden tabernacle door,
The mystery imprisoned in its wall
Of marble white. They lit with holy gleam
The candlesticks of gold which stood on high
Before a crucifix, and burned with light
In harmony with dark and glowing flame
In golden sanctuary lamp which hung
In joy above the angel guarded shrine.
Across the quaintly wrought, mosaic floor
A little altar boy, and sweetly pale,
In crimson robe arrayed which was half veiled
By snowy surplice o'er it gently flung,
In reverence passed, in loving preparation
For the pure and stainless sacrifice
To soon arise in celebration of
The feast of love to Mary's heart most pure.

Within the sacristy, through open door
Perceived, the amice Ferdinand had bound
With holy prayer about his glowing throat,
And carefully had thrown about his form
The snowy alb, which fell in graceful fold
Upon the marble floor. He bound it close
With golden cincture, looking up to God
In Heaven, upon his earnest lips a prayer
For strength to fight and overcome the hosts

IVAN

Of night who strive to drag the innocent
From happy state to degradation low
And terrible. The stole, the maniple,
The sacred chasuble, with prayers devout
He slowly donned with care; then lifting up
With tender smile of love a simply wrought
And glowing chalice of pure gold he turned
And followed in the steps of servitor,
With earnest eyes downcast, in movement slow
And calm as light which irresistible
Maintains at morn its triumph on the sky,
To sunlit shrine which stood in readiness.

When turning to descend the altar stairs
In solemn reverence beginning mass,
To Cornelia's dreamy eyes he seemed
An angel fairer than the one who came
In raging storm of black and dreadful night
Which swept so late about the castle walls,
Steadfast in power of the halls of truth.
The wondrous beauty of his face entranced,
The virgin blue of eyes mysterious
Upraised for one brief instant to the quaint
And gothic choir, the dark unruffled hair
Which clustered close and tenderly about
A white and noble brow of innocence;
Chaste moving lips, wherein the glowing hue
Of pink in perfect beauty was contained;
Pure lips which moved in loving prayer for all
The wicked hearts of men, and offered up
For them the holy sacrifice of peace.
What angel could be dearer to the hearts
Of those who cling with love and confidence

IVAN

To mighty arm of priest, who has the power
To bind or lose on earth the souls of men.

It was the feast of gentle Mary's heart
Most holy, pure and high, and brightly on
The golden bordered chasuble, within
The sacred form of pale embroidered cross
Her face appeared in lines of deepest blue,
As if through her most glorious heart this day,
As sweetest incense, all devotions would
Ascend unto the Sacred Heart of Him
Who placed her on His high and golden throne
Above the angels, to deliver man.
Cornelia prayed; devotion wrapped her in
Its soft and golden veil; she seemed to hear
Above in calmly sweet accompaniment
To prayer and silent movements of the priest
A viol's clear seraphic music sweet
Which sounded near. The chime of sanctus bell
Brought terror to her heart. Swiftly she knelt,
While angels sang in notes of joy about
The Holy shrine where God came down in love,
Not even daring to uplift their eyes,
In beauty bending low the Lord to greet.

In wrapt attentiveness Cornelia saw
The holy priest uplift the chalice high
And golden, drinking lovingly, as though
Translated from the earth to Paradise;
Then hold it tenderly while he who served
Kissed lovingly two bright and crystal vials
And poured from one a liquid sparkling bright.
He drank again from sacred vessel of

IVAN

The humble poor, and turning moved toward
The little crimson clothed altar boy.
A dazzling light streamed down from Heaven on
His glowing form, as if assuming in
Its early ray his soul in glory bright,
To bear it up to God and to the one
On whose annunciation feast his sweet
And clear blue eyes first saw the light of day.
But soon, how swift the golden moments fled,
The mass was o'er, and when Cornelia raised
Again her startled eyes the priest who seemed
To her an angel clothed in shining robe
Of gold had genuflected low and gone
From altar white.

But far upon the morn
A bugle note was heard, as solemn and
As sweet as note of Gabriel which on
The air will sound in warning o'er the earth
When he descending calls the faithful soul
To God. Within the eastern portal white
And gleaming high as great cathedral door
Of marble pure, beneath a graceful spire
On gothic imminence, Cornelia stood
In dread expectancy, in fear and watched
Through myrtle trees of green o'ercowered with
The fragrant blossoms pink, extending to
An arch above the gate on pillars high,
Serenely sweet in early glow of sun,
The dew of early morn upon the petals borne
Of flowers pale through faint ascending mist
Of dull and dreamy blue; the charm of hope
Contained within their beauty delicate,

IVAN

The balm of peace within their fragrance rare
Diffused upon the morning atmosphere.

The iron gate in dread solemnity
Swung slowly back, and through its myrtle arch
Advanced with measured tread a bugler robed
In black, and bearing on his crest the plume
Of Oelmar dark. His clarion note pealed forth
In measured solemn sound, proclaiming loud
The advent of death within the castle walls,
So weirdly sad in gloom, compelling sweet
But flood of tears its sorrow could complete.
Within his steps and through the myrtle gate
The soldiers came. They were attired in hue
Of deepest, dark and silent grief that burned
Repressed in bosoms flooded with the tears
Of penitence, awaiting but the sound
Of melancholy voice in solemn gloom,
To break in woe, in lamentations deep,
In sorrow forth, as wild and stormy air
Upon the desert plain, as deep as wail
Of night upon a battle field alone
Where in the solemn mystery of death
Lie wrapped in gloomy shrouds the souls of men.

With solemn, measured tread and slow, the long
Procession came, of gloom enshrouded black
Beneath the gleaming arch of myrtle tree
In bloom. With death inspiring gloom it wound
In dreadful line up to the marble door
Of Altenstein, and deep the solemn knell
Of tolling bell in cross surmounted spire
Pealed forth in measured tones and funereal,

IVAN

As through the iron gate on cedar bough
The bier upborne in strong but trembling hands
Of sable soldiery, the knightly form
Of Ivan in its gloom and sorrow came;
As o'er the human heart when love is dead
Its ministers portray the beauty of
Its silent form, so cold in death his face
Above the gloom of shroud encircled bier
Appeared in light as that of little child
In peaceful slumber deep. Three mourning forms
Behind him sadly came, and as they passed
Slowly within the iron gate it closed
With heavy sound upon the morning air.

In solemn state before an altar high
Of Altenstein in peacefulness there lay
On bier of cedar bough the knightly form
Of Ivan pale, in kingly beauty proud.
On either side a row of candles bright
And burning steadily inconstant gleamed,
Revealing white his ghostly face, the hands
Which folded as a cross upon his breast
In silence lay, star-sweet against the gloom
Of dark appalling shroud, forever still.
So, pale his beauty shone to Catherine there
Who robed in black, in deep humility
Knelt motionless beside his lowly form.
The tears had ceased to flow, the heart in grief
Was wrapped in night of darkest calvary,
Was broken as the heart of one who wept
Thereon, and followed to the sacred tomb
Of newly earven stone, in lowly grief,
Unspeakable, in deepest woe of death,

IVAN

Her only Son, who from the cross to her,
By fiends crucified, returned again.

High in the gothic choir knelt Percival,
A mourner's mantle o'er his dusky robe
Of green, which shining partly through revealed
In mystic light a cross of wondrous gold
Upon his youthful heart. His flowing hair
Whereon the gold of sunlight softly shone,
His face so pure and white, the eyes of blue,
The lips of sacred mould, his countenance
Was filled with holy light of sombre faith.
In lowliness he bent to pray; a tear
Fell softly down upon the cedar bier.
With clasped hands by him Cornelia knelt
In snowy robe; her eyes of darkest hue
In perfect faith and innocence were raised
In beauteous light; her lips with childish prayer
For him who lay below were moving swift
And silently: for hope forever springs
Within the heart of youth, as fountain of
The radiant light, the fair and mystic hue
Of rainbow in the sky which hangs above
The deeper gloom of dark enshrouded earth.

Within the vaulted choir another knelt,
As gracious as the light which softly down
Descending through the holy window high
Threw shadow of a lamb in radiance of
Its heavenly peace upon her snowy form
Which in reflection, softly calm in peace
And holiness, shone on the quiet face
Of him so white above the sable gloom

IVAN

Below. It was the form of Adelaide;
O'er her a mantle hung in tenderness,
In solemn beauty such as wraps the stars
On holy night. She wept in silence as
The raindrops falling down upon the earth
That quiet lies behind the trail of storm,
As though to gently soothe the broken bough
Of cedar tree which caught by angry wind
Lies shattered on the ground, as though to smooth
The furrow softly in the earth, which made
By raging flood which swept the frenzied air
And calm secluded green, now lies bereft
And bare unto the angry sky, defaced
In frightful storm of warring elements,
Its Springtime beauty fled, the Autumn come.

Before the altar high Cajetan stood
In robes of sable black to offer up
The holy sacrifice for him who lay
In death below, in white material form,
The soul within the body's tomb inclosed.
He solemn threw from urn of dusky gold
In hands of little servitor upheld
The water holy, broke the sombre spell
Which bound to earth the soul of Ivan fair.
Wildly the golden flames of candles leaped
In frantic fear, and o'er Cajetan's heart
A strange appalling gloom, in terror strove
To subtly creep, but vain the evil charm;
The holy priest returned to altar high
And gleaming white, and from his sacred lips
The fervent prayers of man were breathed to Him
Who heard upon His throne above. His dark

IVAN

And mystic eyes in rapture seemed entranced,
As slowly to and fro he moved again
In holiness, in calm and fortitude
Intrepid against the enemy unseen;
A soldier of the cross who fought serene
Inspired by sweet assurance from above.

Scarce audibly he breathed the words of mass
In fervor deep, in tenderness and love,
And as the sacred bell in triumph rang
At consecration, Michael swiftly came
With hosts of angels bright, descending with
His Lord upon the altar high. In love
He raised the soul which lay on cedar bough
Where holy water gleamed in candles' light
As early dew, which on its solemn green
Had fallen mystically, defying dark
Baálzebub and all his league of night,
Who shrank in terror back before his form
Which glorious appeared in splendor of
The morning light; in consternation wild,
Defeated evermore in battle for
The soul of him encircled with the light,
And fleeing as a cloud before the sun
Sought regions of the night, and battleground
Afar, no more to overthrow in war
The weaker soul of man, to deadly strive
Against the God of all the universe.

XV

Afar beyond the blue midsummer skies,
The dark and changing atmosphere of earth,
The misty clouds which float in grandeur by
The circling horizon, so far the earth
From that exalted place within the light
Seems but a star which quivers on the rim
Of all the universe, whose transient rays
Are seen but dim and undefined, and set
With millions in the diadem of night:
High in the changeless realm of Paradise
Close by the crystal sea, the throne of God
Which mighty gleams, there is a garden fair,
Unknown to mortal eyes, to mind of man
Incomprehensible, its beauty high
Exquisite in the holy love and peace
From out the heart of God in perfect joy,
As o'er the darkened earth the morning sun
In glory streams through crimson clouds of night
Which glow as softly as the summer sea
And neath the fragrant touch of breezes form
A solemn halo in the eastern sky.

Beneath the soft and crimson light which shone
In beauty down upon the garden fair,
In mystic glow as drifting dreamy mist
O'erspreads a summer grove in early morn,
Arising peacefully, majestic trees
Of sacred form in leaf of olive green,

IVAN

Grew on the gentle slope from snowy hall
Of mansion white, and shaded tranquilly
The pleasant winding way that changeless seemed
To glow, effulgent in the crimson tide
Of gleaming light mysterious within
Those beauteous gardens of the Sacred Heart.
A thousand scarlet flowers blooming there
Appeared in deep titanic foliage of
A dusky green, reflecting wondrously
The deep and sacred glow of rays that formed
A diadem about the flaming spire
On which a golden cross in majesty,
In splendor, gleamed, which lit the shaded green
And pleasant winding way which brightly led
To ancient tree, with pure and holy light
As scarlet fires of sanctuaries gleam.

Upon the ancient tree which solemn rose
In grandeur high above adjacent grove,
As mighty ruler towers o'er the wall
Of time, its many thousand leaves, the shape
Of Sacred Heart, in deepest hue of green
And faintly traced with glowing tint of red,
Whispered secretly in fond companionship.
Its mighty trunk uprose beside a well
Which flowed in clear and rippling beauty sweet,
And spread in drooping branch about a space
As glowing wide as snowy throne above,
O'ershading scarlet flowers at its base,
Protecting with its might the winding way
That led by many a bright and pleasant turn
Up to its silence deep unbroken but
For flow of rippling waters clear which rose

IVAN

In crystal beauty from the circled well
Of oriental form, o'ergrown with vine
Of ivy green, which fell in gentle line
From glowing marble mouth and lay upon
The sands in crystal light of many drops
Of clear and purest stream; its holy peace
Surpassing that revealed to distant earth.

As sweetest music to the ear of One
It fell in trembling adoration on
The snowy sand, and rippling in a song
Of joyous minor strain, in cadences
Of love, fled down the sloping hill, amid
The pleasant green of misty garden high
Until it softly fell into the sea
And joined the harmony of seraphim.
Upon the holy well in purest robe
Of white, beneath the mighty strength of tall
O'ershading tree, surrounded dreamily
By crimson glowing light, the only Son
Of God was bending down in majesty,
And listened to the strain of mortal's sphere
The sparkling waters bore in fountain clear
Arising from the light of earth below;
It bore upon its flood the ceaseless cry
Of man, transmuting all his pain,
His grief to perfect joy, in melodies that rang
Scarcely audibly and weird as waters flow
That gently fell from marble gleaming mouth
Of ivy covered oriental well.

As delicate and white as purest bloom
Of lily pale which glows in virgin vale

IVAN

Untouched by man, as chaste as changeless snow
On highest mountain peak above the cloud
Of summer, pure as morning star above
The scarlet earth, as beautiful as dream
Which comes to mind of innocent enwrapped
In mystic spell of holy banquet sweet;
Immaculate, more fair than flaming soul
Of seraph high, the King of Heaven bowed
In contemplative love, and heard the cry
Of little, feeble, struggling ones below.
O Lamb of God, thy beauty is so white
And wondrous fair, the mortal mind is lost
In rapture at the thought of Thee, the heart
O'erwhelmed with love unspeakable; and dost
Thou deign to look upon Thy children then
With eyes so sweetly pure and smile of love
As deep; the glowing heart is lost in love
And wrapped in ecstasy so strangely sweet,
So pure and all consuming bright that earth
May scarce contain its prisoned trembling soul.

He hears the sobbing voice of little one
Bereft of all which mortal life holds dear,
Who crushed by hand of demon mastered heart,
Tyrannic, cries in dread petition deep
To that unfailing One who marks the fall
Of sparrow to the earth. With loving might
He comes to dwell within the heart and guide
It gently through the days of suffering with
A gracious hand; to poor Samaritan
He gives protection swiftly sure, and in
The future days when sin creeps darkly in
To grieve His Sacred Heart, with hand of love

IVAN

Still is the way to Heaven pointed out.
Affliction comes to turn the erring soul
Unto its God, and when again the bowed
And frightened penitent with broken heart
And soul so darkly stained with leprosy
Stands afar and cries: "Have mercy, Jesus!"
He bids him trembling go unto His priest
Where all the crimson stains are washed away;
Sweet peace and innocence in beauty rare
Enthroned; and all his future days are spent
In peace of mind, in love and happiness.

When Jesus bent and smiled in purity
Upon the clear and silent depths below,
Which closely mirrored earth in mists afar,
He caught the earnest prayer of little child
Which mingled softly with a deeper one,
A priestly suppliant. Through crystal well
He bent a calm and loving eye upon
The distant spires of radiant Altenstein.
Within the hall before an altar high
By which Cajetan stood he saw a bier
On cedar bough, in solemn state between
The candles blessed, and lit with holy flame.
It was Cornelia's voice so clearly heard,
Cornelia bending low, the innocence
Of childhood on her white and noble brow,
Whose beauteous hair but seemed reflection dim
Of that transcendent light which shone above,
A crimson glow within the mansions high,
The mystic gardens of the Sacred Heart.
With love He smiled upon the little one
And gave assurance sweet that all her prayers

IVAN

For him whose earthly form beneath her lay
In silent gloom would not unanswered be.

With gentle sigh He raised His beauteous eyes;
Turned from the rippling well to gaze upon
The path ascending from the realm of earth,
But let a snowy hand which bore the print
Of nail, remain within the crystal well
To feel the grief which rose from out its flood.
Faintly and far on crimson ray which led
To earth He saw upon the rolling clouds
Saint Michael clothed in armor bright ascend
As glowing ray from cross surmounted spire;
Transcendent shone his helmet's glowing light,
But from his sword there flashed a silvery gleam.
Within his arms he bore as little child
The soul of Ivan robed in sable hue,
As earthly form in mystery below;
And hesitating not alighted swift
Upon the far and crystal sea of light;
Traversing hastily with flaming tread
Its rolling deep transparent flood; at length
Upon the shores of Heaven's garden high
Respectfully his golden sandaled feet
Were placed in holy confidence and love.

Before his Master bowing low he wound
His golden mantle from the soul of man,
Of Ivan dark, and calmly placed him down
As little child upon the marble stair
On which the clear and singing water fell
Prostrate, Ivan, adoring, full of fear,
His God, remained in silence for a time,

IVAN

Who viewed him tenderly, and solemn thus
Within the scene, the peaceful radiance
Of gardens exquisite of the Sacred Heart
The three remained in silence strangely deep.
Before the mind of Ivan, one by one,
The sins of all his life were then portrayed,
Divested of the veil material.
He shuddered terribly, in horror deep
And uncontrolled at crimes arising in
Their hideous, wild and black enormity;
But most of all the sin of unbelief
And those depending on its principal
Were as a cloud which rolled in frightful storm
Of woe inspired and dark tempestuous fear.

At length the Master spoke in tones of love,
But firm as golden harp attuned by hand
That skillful struck its sounding chords afar:
“Ivan, raise thine eyes: behold the grief
I felt at thy transgressions dark and deep.”
Ivan looked as one who on the sun
Gazes at evening tide when all the west
Is glowing in the scarlet light, and saw
A bleeding heart, entwined with crown of thorns,
From which a golden flame of love issued.
He saw his Master’s heart in bosom white
Tortured in agony for the sins of those
Who faithless leave Him on the blinded earth.
He sank again in wild and deep despair
Upon the marble stair, and muttered low:
“My glorious Lord, the deepest place in Hell
Should be the just reward for all the crime
Committed by these demon guided hands,

IVAN

Which bound thy holy ones and cast them down
Into the dungeon low; the wayward heart
Which fought against Thy holy will and strove
Thy throne on earth in ruin to overthrow.”

“My child, thou hast condemned thyself to woe,
To endless punishment. Thou seest now
The fearful shame of all thy evil deeds,
And greater than them all the unbelief
Inspired by Satan’s mind: But I am Love;
And Mercy tempers now the just decree.
I saw thee when a child thy heart was mine,
And loved thee fondly in the time of youth.
I guarded thee with angels on the earth—
But O what grief when thou didst darkly fall
As flaming star from out the peaceful skies
Of earthly night—Denying even me
In base ingratitude. I saw thee when
Thy mother plead, when as a fastened door
Thy heart denied its friends. I grieved when thou
Didst bind my servitors and cast them down
Beneath thy castle walls. I saw thee when
The fear of sin thy heart could never move
By apparition dread and terror of
The frightful storm descending on Oelmar.

“But counterbalanced are the evil deeds—
Almost—Thy death occasioned for a friend,
For Percival, so faithful and beloved,
Who mourns for thee below in sorrow deep—
Renouncement brave of evils darkly borne
Within a heart repentant while the soul
Was yet on earth in bonds material—

IVAN

The prayers of those who intercede for thee
Have touched my heart: but justice must be done.
Thou hast pronounced thy sentence terrible,
But I will lighten it. Go, suffer in
A dungeon deep, a purgatorial cell,
Until a scion of thy noble race,
Which wars against my power upon the earth,
Shall turn to me again, and worship in
The halls of truth and purity; shall pray
To me for thee imprisoned dark and low
Within a silence deep and frightful as
The dungeons of Oelmar. Do not despair;
This hope shall be thy stay, that when thy time
Is suffered out below thou shalt return
And dwell with me in Heaven eternally.”

XVI

Alone, beside a cold and solemn tomb,
Windblown, upraised in gleaming white against
The Autumn sky; where faint and far away
The circling clouds of white rush down in flight
To sombre horizon, where golden, brown,
The leaves are rustling wildly by, with low
And moaning sound, as though preoccupied
With hidden thought of fear, and sighing o'er
The summer past in retribution deep,
And vainly seeking for a place of rest;
At length by air in chilling mazes caught
And heartless hurled in wanton fury down
Into the river far below: where gently fell
The light of low inconstant sun which shone
Above a screen of changing poplar leaf,
In silence sat before an iron door
Of solitary tomb the darkened form
Of Catherine arrayed in mournful robe,
In sable hue, a silhouette against
The prominence of marble gleaming white.

Oppressed, low bent the sighing reeds beneath
A northern blast, extending branch of green
Into a rippling pool, as though in search
Below its sphinxlike surface for the days
Of softly sighing breezes from the south,
And summertime, for days forever gone
Beyond the sobbing call, or plaintive cry
That rose amidst their slender beauty deep.
Far, far away the sound of evening bell

IVAN

Was heard, o'er ancient forest weirdly borne
On swift inconstant wind from out the north;
But wilder on its changing current came
The shriller cry in far unswerving flight
From snowy form of bird as though pursued
By fear of danger on the Autumn sky.
So sped the sombre day swift to its close
In strange prophetic gloom, a chilling sheet
Of grey which falling hid the yellow leaf.
Obscured the joyous flower which in time
Of summer bloomed upon the brow of youth,
And gave its peace to heart of penitent.

“Safe from the chilling blast, safe from the charm
Of sorcerer, who with malignant hand
Strikes from the heart of youth its cherished bloom,
Its purity, as wanton wind from out
The frozen north in fury rends the leaf
From bending tree, and leaves it bare and lone
Beneath condemning sky. Safe in the tomb,
And silent, free from sin forevermore,
From evil, strife, and every woe and care,
The treasure of my heart secure at last
From every grief that mortal heart endures;
Secure within the tomb from subtle snare
Of dread Baálzebub, no more his spell
About my darling's soul may hope to fling,
And never o'er his heart dominion will
Obtain again. Now may the grieving heart
In quiet hope to rest; now may the form
In supplications bend without the tomb
Of silent, deeply buried love, and plead
With confidence for safety of his soul.

XVII

“O that this frightful weight of woe would drive
My throbbing, tortured brain into the gloom
Of madness, and to dread oblivion
Descending as a suffocating cloud
Of darkest night upon the underworld
Of pain and woe. O that from palsied hands
This burning chain in pity could be struck,
And I at liberty to walk again
As long ago, upon the quiet earth;
So far away, it seems inconstant, faint,
And as a star within a black abyss
Of all destroying night; that glowing earth
Whereon I strove in deadly war it seems
Unending time, a thousand years ago;
A frightful age of grief in prison cell,
Alone, upon the stone a prisoner here
I’ve lain within this deep and voiceless pit
Echoing with the shriek and wailing of
The lost within their dread and narrow house,
The suffocating cell of woe and death.

“What spectre hideous before my gaze
Now looms! O God! I see the face of one
Before me rise, the face of one I loved
In days forever gone. The helpless lips
Are moving white as if in voiceless pain,
The wild appealing eyes in hungry grief
Transfix me with their terror burning deep;

IVAN

And deathly hands are crossed upon a breast.
What crime do I associate with thee!
O sin, forgotten now, that sinketh deep
A scourge with countless thong of barbed steel
Into my soul. O pale inconstant form
And ghostly face of death, which ever as
A heavy cloud remaineth close to me.
Unbind the chain and give me liberty;
Unlock the prison door and save me from
This woe of death! Thou mockest at my plea;
Thy heart's a blasted stone of prison floor;
Thy terror lies oppressive o'er my head.
Begone, I beg of thee, and leave me now,
O fearful spectre of an inward woe!

“Yet leave me not; for then alone amid
The shriek and wailing of the lost I am,
Alone but for the faces hideous
And black in demon hate that changing mock
Me in their wild and burning misery;
That ever float maliciously and slow
About this charnal cell of penitence.
My scalding tears have run for ages on
This cold, unfeeling stone, this bed of woe!
That I could rise and see from prison grate
Through blinding mists that lay in gloom above
This realm of pain, the river flowing wide
That rages in its tribulation wild
Outside my narrow house. What matter if
I view upon its tide the shrieking ones
Who float in swift destruction down, are tossed
O'er frightful verge of precipice of Hell;
My penitence as deep and terrible

IVAN

Ten thousand times as elevated pride
Which o'er my soul in former time its sway
Supremely held.

“But hark! What awful sound,
What wild tempestuous roar in terror comes,
In thunder deep to shake with energy
This pit of adamant! What countless groans
Arise upon the whirlwinds of the night
In warning to the earth! The waters dash
In frenzy through the high and prison bars
And flood my cell! Echoing piteous,
I hear the cries of mortals borne to death
Upon that stormy tide; transfixed my soul
With fearful horror at their end. The seed
Of unbelief by hand of Leader sown
In harvest dashes down to Hell—o'erflows
In raging tide destruction's river deep!
My God! It comes to flood the dungeon floor!
Save me from death! O must I here remain
While waters creep upon my stony bed.
Be strangled as a rat within its cell;
O torture of the damned, I cannot bear it.
Remember, Lord, thy promise long ago.”

As o'er a storm of grief in human heart
Comes echo of a strain from solemn sky
Of music sweet inspired by angel's voice
In words of hope; so high a clarion note
Adown the corridor resounded clear
Of purgatory's dim, mysterious hall;
And sweet above the thunder storm which rent
In fury deep the underworld of pain,

IVAN

Eternal grief and woe, Ivan the strain
Of Hope discerned; lifted a weary head
From lowly bed of pain, of black despair,
Gazed eagerly upon the prison door
Which barred arose between him and the hall.
His form in white lay clothéd, spiritual,
As if in death, emaciated by
The scourges of despair; but purified,
Again upraised to state of innocence,
Prepared to meet in glory of the sky
The fair inhabitants of peace. He gazed
Appealingly with eyes of deepest blue
Upon the grated door, but strove in vain
To loose from hands the heavy manacles.

Within the iron door a key turned swiftly
Then, a gentle form appeared in light,
In shadow of the cell; a beauteous hand
Was laid in smiling confidence upon
The galling chain which bound the prisoner helpless;
To the floor it fell upon the stone
With harsh displeasing noise—the tortured one
Again was free, unbound forevermore,
And o'er him bent the form of Michael sweet
And holy, mild, as some fair knight arrayed
In robe of gold which fell serenely down
Upon the barren floor. Within his steps
Was peace, a gentle radiance of joy;
His tender eyes were as the stars which shine
In solemn night o'er path of vanished storm,
As radiantly he bent o'er mortal form
And raised from lowly resting place, Ivan.—
His soul, as fondly a mother o'er her child

IVAN

Bends softly down and clasps it to the heart
With sweet and tender words of love to sooth
Its troubled sleep, to drive away the spell
Of demon from its fair and snowy brow.

“Ivan, I come to bear thee to the sky,
Away from pain, which burning in thy heart
Hath purified thy soul forevermore.
Thy Master bade me come and bear thee up
Forever in His courts to worship and
Adore His perfect glory shining forth
In peace and love: for now on earth below
A mortal hath returned unto His fold,
Descendant of that line which strove in war
On earth the shining Emperor to dethrone,
And prays for thee in Purgatory deep.
Thy happiness is hardly realized,
For yet the terror reigning here below
Hang o’er thy fainting soul as solemn mist
Obscures the morning ray from mansions fair
On high. Within my arms I’ll bear thee home
As a little child through shining realms of space,
Far, far away from all this grief and woe.
Come to thy God, and joy forevermore.”

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